

DECEMBER 1949

The GRAIL



The Grail

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OUR COVER THIS MONTH IS A
REPRODUCTION OF A MURAL
BY DOM GREGORY DE WITT, O.S.B.
See page 14.

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The Grail has, since its beginning in 1917, established a tradition of good reading for the Catholic family. Articles and stories by well known writers have appeared month after month, bringing instruction, inspiration, and entertainment to our readers.

The new editors hope to continue that tradition and make improvement every month. Our first step in that direction will be the change in format next month. Realizing the popularity of the booklet format of the direct magazines we have decided to print the Grail in this smaller size.

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What Does Christmas Mean?

It means that hearts which have been divided by death or by distance need never be truly separated as long as they are united to the Babe of Bethlehem.

GF MEN ARE EVER TO UNDERSTAND anything at all about the mystery of Christmas let them understand one thing—how the Eternal Son of God not only took to Himself a body of the pure flesh of Mary His Mother, but how He also took to Himself a *body formed of the flesh and spirit of all the baptized, a body made up of millions of members vulnerable to pain and death, to cold and heat, to sinful weakness and apostasy, to ignorance and malice; a body likewise capable of fervor and martyrdom, heroic constancy and saintliness.* This body Our Lord called the kingdom of heaven; we call it the communion of saints.

The most tremendous truth of the mystery of Christmas is that it lifts a man out of his dangerous isolation and loneliness and makes him a member of the communion of saints. Karl Adam in his book, *THE SON OF GOD*, says significantly that there is no such thing as an isolated and solitary Christian, for there is no such thing as an isolated and solitary Christ. "Christianity," he says, "is a union of members with their Head, a Holy Community, a Holy Body." This means that there can be no such thing as a practical faith in Christ except in union with Christ and with His members in the communion of saints. A Christian filled with the vitality of grace communicated to him by his membership in the communion of saints is not like a solitary explorer scaling a dangerous mountain precipice, but rather like a member of a climbing party who are roped to their sure-footed guide and to one another in a common enterprise. Every secure foothold the climber makes on the side of the mountain strengthens the position of the whole expedition; and every false step and slip endangers for an instant the lives of all those who are climbing with him.

If this is true then whatever we do as members of the communion of saints either good or bad is of advantage or disadvantage not only to ourselves but to every member of Christ's Body joined to us by grace. We cannot make our confession fervently without strengthening the Church militant, consoling the souls in purgatory and honoring the

blessed in heaven. We cannot commit a deliberate sin without weakening the position of some poor soul desperately struggling against temptation. So closely are we knit to Christ and to one another in this communion of saints.

It is easy to see why no member of the communion of saints can sincerely believe that false and diabolical heresy of modern individualism which finds expression in such sayings as: "A man's life is his own affair," or, "If I want to live this way it's no one else's business." But a man's life is not his own affair, but the affair of everyone in the community he belongs to, and if he is a member of the communion of saints it is the affair of every soul on earth, purgatory and heaven.

Leon Bloy, that violent rebel against modernism, writes in his *Pilgrim of the Absolute*, in this startling fashion: "Every man who performs a free act affects the whole moral universe. If he gives a poor man a penny grudgingly that penny pierces the poor man's hand, falls, pierces the earth, bores holes in the sun, crushes the firmament, and compromises the universe. If he begets an impure act he perhaps darkens thousands of hearts whom he does not know, who are linked mysteriously to him, who need this man to be pure as a dying traveler needs the gospel draught of water; on the other hand a charitable act, an impulse of real pity sings for him the Divine praises from the time of Adam to the end of the ages; it cures the sick, consoles those in despair, calms storms, ransoms prisoners, converts the infidel and protects mankind."

As living members of the blessed communion of saints we are not only one with Christ Jesus born of Mary in Bethlehem, but we are one with the devout Irish cop on Fourth and Broadway in Louisville, the fervent novice shivering in her cell at the Carmel of Lisieux, the negro elevator boy at Marshal Field's in Chicago, and the Cockney taxicab driver in London. We are one with the twelve Apostles, the early martyrs, with St. Benedict, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas of Aquin, Joan of Arc, Bernadette Soubirous, and Mother Cabrini. For our consolation it is well to remember that we are one with our own faithful departed loved ones who have gone before us with the sign of faith and who sleep the sleep of peace. What does Christmas mean? It means that hearts which have been divided by death or by distance need never be truly separated as long as they are united to the Babe of Bethlehem.

Walter Sullivan O.S.B.

The Secret of Advent

Hilary
Ottensmeyer, O.S.B.

is the secret of the seed..
expectancy, restrained joy,
the awareness of good things to come..
this is Advent.

HOPE AND THE SEED

The secret of Advent is the secret of the seed. Pressed down in dark expectancy and peace, awaiting the warmth of rain coming down to free its glad, pent-up powers, the seed lives its miniature life in hope. Tomorrow is its world, with the sun, and leafing with fruit. Advent is this seed-life of the Church year, when we sit in darkness waiting the rising of the Savior-Sun, praying for the heavens to rain down the warm drops of the promised freedom which will break the shell of our hope and allow us to spring up to behold and live before the face of a loving God. Expectancy, restrained joy, the awareness of good things to come, this is Advent.

THE LAMP OF DESIRE

Or it is the secret of the lamp, held high. An anxious hand pushes it forward, and eyes strain to see the Promised One. Here the symbol is all of searching and yearning, with a touch of misery to press and urge, for eyes see only as far as the narrow circle of lamp-light. Then the Church speaks to us:

Looking from afar I see the power of God coming and a mist covering all the earth. Go toward him and say to him: Tell us if you are he who is to reign over the people of Israel. (Resp., 1st Sunday of Advent)

To understand these symbols we need to consider more fully the work of the Church.

TREASURE IN TRIPTYCH

The Church is guardian of three treasures; the past, the present, and the future. These are hers because Christ is hers, and Christ is the mystery of each. Every one of the three has its meaning in Him, and it is the Church's task to teach Christ's work in each of the three. During Advent she does this by telling us, in her four Sunday Masses and in the prayers of the breviary, of the three-fold coming of Christ in this season. First the Church looks back into the past.

THE GREATEST OF THESE

After sin, the weightiest sorrows of the soul are loneliness, fear, and doubt; and the greatest of these is loneliness. A presence is so much easier to escape than an absence, but the heart filled with loneliness is the heart feeling the absence of God, whether it is aware of this need or not. Then comes the realization that now one has to face life without the strength to do so.

A BITTER LONELINESS

This bitter loneliness springs from trying to make earthly homes and hearts into eternal resting places. It is, as in all sin, a mistaking of means for ends. Lust is but loneliness with a perverted hunger for companionship. Loneliness fighting madly for security is ambition; jealousy is loneliness battling to keep the love felt to be so necessary. Hell is an eternal, guilty loneliness.

A LONELINESS WITH HOPE

Loneliness is the keynote of the past, the time before the coming of Christ. But the loneliness the Church speaks of in Advent is a more blessed loneliness, for there is hope. Men were lonely, in their long wait for the coming of the Savior. True, the Messiah, the Christ, has come to join Himself to the Church in intimate union. But the memory of the waiting for Him will be commemorated by the Church each Advent to stir up in us the same tender concern for this Child of Bethlehem, the Hope of the lonely. This is the Child Who divested Himself of His Majesty lest man should be terrified at His splendor. This is the Child Whose humble arrival the darkened mind of man could not comprehend. The prophet Isaiah cries out and says:

Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children, and exalted them: but they have despised me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel hath not known me, and my people hath not understood. Woe to the sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a wicked seed, ungracious children: they have forsaken the Lord, they have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel, they have gone away backwards. (Isa. 1,2-4)

COMING IN MYSTERY

This is the story of the past. But Advent prepares us now for the new birth of Christ in us. This is today's mysterious coming of Christ in spirit and in power. As when the Holy Spirit

overshadowed Mary and she gave her flesh and womb to the Word, so during Advent the same Power is at work, but now upon all men:

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah!
bright wings!

THE SUM OF SANCTITY

This is a much more personal thing than was the historical coming of Christ in the past. Fantastic? No, it is the time-long hidden work of the Spirit of Christ to change the heart of each one of us until that "same mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus." Remember this. God could have canceled our contract with Satan in many ways. He could have made holy, shared His Life with, each saint singly, one after the other, and when the number of these was enough, called them His people, the blessed owners of His eternal happiness.

But He, God, shaped *one* full, complete Man, having all grace, so that the first beginning of His work was already its most final and perfect expression. Christ has the fullness of grace, and there is no new giving any more, but only a sharing in this original gift made to the God-Man. Our sanctity is the overflowing, the outpouring of His fullness, for "of his fullness we have all received."

This *being born* during Advent is the gradual transformation of our old earthy ways of thought, of action, into those of Christ. Our souls are given these dynamic qualities by what we call sanctifying grace. This is Christ being born in us; this is becoming "divine" through Jesus, Who will "reform the body of our humility and transform it into the body of His splendor."

SHARING IN BIRTH

Standing at the Christmas crib, looking at our Brother-Savior, our Child-God, let us remember these stirring words of St. Leo the Great in the breviary lessons for Christmas:

Let us put off the old man with his acts, and having attained to a *participation in the birth of Christ*, let us renounce all the works of the flesh. Know O Christian, your dignity: and, having become a *partaker in the divine nature*, do not desire by means of an unworthy life to return to your former lowliness. Remember of what head and what body you are a member. Remember that, freed from the power of darkness, you have been brought into the light and the kingdom of God.

This, then, is today's Nativity, that of Christ being born into the lives of each of us.

FITNESS FOR LIFE TO COME

All sanctity is a fitness for the life to come. And the life to come is the future which the Church

has in mind in Advent. But here the future means not just the coming into eternal life of your individual soul or of mine. This is *The Future*, the time of the second coming of Christ *in the flesh*, His coming in glory and majesty to judge all of mankind. To the heart of the sinful, it is a coming that is steeped in terror and fear, for "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" in nakedness of soul, unfit for the life of happiness for which one was created. Fear, too, will be upon the just, but a fear ennobled by love, the fearing of a contrite child which knows it will receive pardon from a loving father. This future-phase of Advent's thoughts springs up into acts of penance and mortification. Our minds must have quiet to work earnestly, to sweep, scrape and hack off a year's slag of diffidence. The Church will be crying out from day to day in Collect and Communion prayer, Introit and Invitatory, "Come, Lord Jesus!" And, from the everlasting Now of eternity, comes Christ's response: "It is true, I come quickly."

WOOL, WEAVER, WEAVE

Time is like wool, and Christ is the weaver of it, and we are the weave. The pattern of our lives gives meaning to, explains the very purpose of time. This is what Advent comes to teach us. The past was in the hand of Christ, as is the present, and the future. The map of the future is spread before Christ already, in all its minute details and tremendous, eternal consequences. Live Advent in its threefold richness, praying over, studying the prayers of the Mass, doing penance. And then, Christmas Day will come, Christmas, which sums up past graces and bestows the fullness of present graces. The future we will regard with confidence, in the spirit of St. Paul who reminds us, "All things are yours...whether the world, or life, or death; or things present or things to come—all are yours, and you are Christ's and Christ is God's." (I Cor. 3,22-23)

THE
GRAIL STAFF
THE MEN AT THE ABBEY PRESS
AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY
JOIN IN WISHING YOU
A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A NEW YEAR
FILLED WITH THE BLESSINGS
OF GOD

If this motion picture story of St. Vincent de Paul

Clifford Brier

MONSIEUR VINCENT

were shown in every city and town of the United States, many a Christmas would be more Christ-like.

THE film *Monsieur Vincent* is more than a reverent and exalted account of the life and work of Vincent de Paul, a humble French priest of the 17th century, who gave up his worldly goods to devote himself to the desperately poor. It is a heart-warming story about one of humanity's greatest benefactors. Never before have the Christian teachings of service, poverty and humility been so forcefully portrayed. At the same time, it is a masterpiece of complete integrity in the motion picture art. The sweep and grandeur in its lavish spectacle is matched by the

tender beauty of unforgettably inspiring scenes, proving so many moments to cherish that one would have to see it twice for all its merits.

The crowds flocking to see it and the critics acclaiming it with singular unanimity are not all Catholic. The film stresses the principles of universal spiritual values in the hearts of people of all faiths and denominations. As such, it is enthusiastically endorsed by the Protestant Motion Picture Council. The *London Observer* states that only a miracle could produce a better picture, while the *New Yorker*, abandon-

ing its customary air of exquisite boredom, seemingly bent on humoring a besotted public, hails it as effective enough to divert an infidel. Added to nine international awards, the picture also received the Academy Award as the best foreign film of 1948.

If ever a picture was made with faith, that picture is *Monsieur Vincent*. It represents the fulfillment of a childhood dream of the director, Maurice Cloche. Filled with the idea for years, he raised the money necessary by national subscription. 50,000 Frenchmen who couldn't be wrong, representing divergent religious and political beliefs, contributed to the production. This enthusiasm is indicative of the special regard the French have for St. Vincent de Paul, the poor swine herder, who fostered a great social revolution. Their inspiring response to this monument to Monsieur Vincent is reminiscent of ancient times when each individual contributed a brick to the building of great cathedrals, such as Notre Dame. Pierre Fresnay, who plays the title role and is non-Catholic, contributed 25% of his salary to the film as a labor of love.

The director has avoided the temptation to give way to the picturesque or historic. The settings and costumes are faithful to the period of the 17th century, but the spirit of the story is contemporary and eternal, for human misery has no year.... it has only seasons. The quiet sincerity and deep reverence with which the film has been directed shine forth as the tale unfolds movingly, never descending to the maudlin or slipshod.

An agnostic, Jean Anouilh, found himself so impressed by the profound humanity and the will to do good in the life of Monsieur Vincent



Pierre Fresnay as St. Vincent de Paul

that he has fashioned a script and dialogue of powerful brilliance.

Pierre Fresnay does not act the part of Vincent de Paul. He is Vincent de Paul. Sharing much of the praise and the responsibility for the greatness of the picture, he feels responsible for little in the final result. He states that his model, the humble saint, acted for him by holding out a hand for guidance. Fresnay approached the part with utter humility and a burning sincerity, and the screen seems to breathe an air of conviction and intensity.

The atmosphere is often gruesome in its realism. One can almost smell the stench of mud and filth in the streets of the slums and the vermin-ridden hovels of the wretched people. Satisfying too is the honesty with which the religious atmosphere is captured, heretofore so elusive in most motion pictures.

The film is so eloquent and speaks such a universal language that much of the French dialogue seems understandable without resorting to the English titles.

The action of the film depicts the departure of Vincent de Paul from a life of ease and luxury to become a cleric in the shabby town of Châtillon. He finds the people living in terror of the plague and the church abandoned. The nobles tell him of an old woman who has been walled up in her house, which will be burned after her death. Monsieur Vincent forces his way into the house and finding the woman dead, saves her child.

For his efforts to alleviate suffering, he is stoned and shunned, but finding the village stricken with poverty and disease, he opens a soup kitchen and a hospital. His life speaks the language often repeated but little understood or practiced among Christians, that bearing a slander, suspicion or unjust insult in patient silence is a more perfect sacrifice to God and a surer test of sincere virtue than the most shining exterior act of virtue.

He earns the sympathy of a wealthy woman and begins his life-work of feeding the starving, soothing the ill and attending those abandoned by cruelty and prejudice. In an age when nobles lived in

splendor and the poor in abject misery, he was the first to raise his voice in behalf of the down trodden. He felt that before the souls of men could be saved, they must be given a life of which they could be confident. The people responded to the love with which he gave them bread. Self-denial, humility and the spirit of prayer were the means by which he sought to instill the virtues of meekness and simplicity in the hearts of all Christians.

As Vincent's renown spreads, Cardinal Richelieu assigns him as chaplain of the galleys where men are treated like beasts and made to row vessels for the sporting pleasure of the naval officers. Many die wretchedly, suffering under the lash. One unforgettable scene occurs when a slave collapses and Monsieur Vincent takes his place.

Appalled by this further sign of the treatment of the poor, Monsieur Vincent gives up all his possessions and starts out penniless to serve the poor. He obtains monetary assistance in Paris to more fully develop his crusade against misery so the poor may have their daily bread.

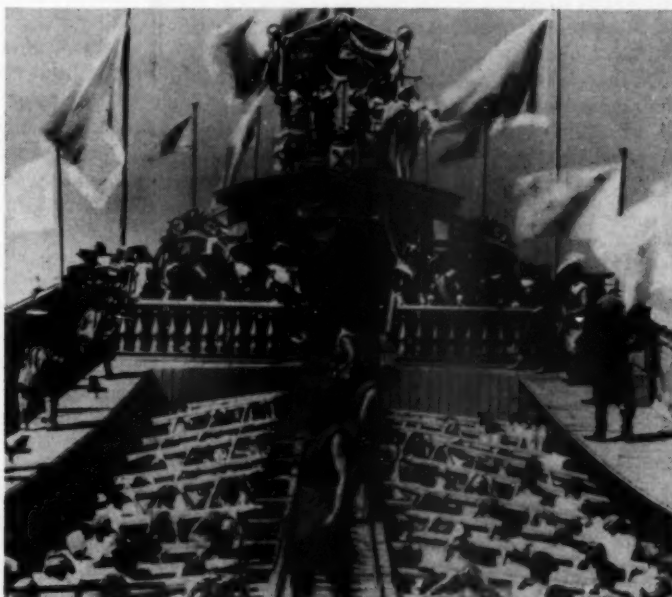
Not satisfied with his life as the end draws near, he is asked what one must do to have achieved some-



His first Victory

thing in life. Softly and with great deliberation, he replies, "More." Then turning to a Sister about to make her first visit to the poor, he tells her, "It is only through love that the poor forgive you the bread that you give them."

In the words of Father Gardiner, literary editor of *America*, "If it were shown in every city and town of the United States, many a Christmas would be more Christ-like."



Galleys where M. Vincent relieved a slave

QUEEN CHRISTMAS

by Berne Ziegler

Sylvia thought that she would be happy if she wore the lovely blue dress to the Ski Ball.. until she found that happiness at Christmas is more than just getting what you want.

SYLVIA ADAMS clattered into the house, bringing a gust of snow with her.

"Hi, Mom," she called from the hall as she tugged at her boots.

"I'm in the kitchen, dear," her mother answered.

The Adams' kitchen was warm and smelled of raisins and brown sugar. It was only five days before Christmas and pans of green and pink cookies, of gingerbread men and stars and little Santa Clauses with red sugar suits covered the tables and chairs.

"Mom!" Sylvia said reproachfully, shaking the melting snow from her blonde bangs. "Mom, you didn't wait for me to decorate the cookies."

"Weren't you the cookie decorator who was going to be home early?" Mrs. Adams asked. "It's 5:30; I just couldn't wait any longer."

"I had a good reason, Mom," Sylvia said, deliberating between a green star and a Santa Claus. "I was Christmas shopping, and I found just exactly what I want for Christmas."

"Oh," Mrs. Adams frowned a little. "Sylvia," she said, "I think I hear Dad and I haven't even started dinner. Hurry and set the table, will you, dear?"

Dinner was much quieter than usual. Sylvia sat and dreamed of herself in the lovely blue dress, the simply terrific blue dress in the Bon-bon's main window.

"Sylvia, do you remember Mr. Poppleteed?" her father asked.

"Ummm," Sylvia agreed absently. She was picturing herself and Tommy Reed being elected King and Queen Christmas at the Ski Ball on Christmas eve.

"I could never pronounce his name so I used to call him Mr. Poppyseed," Sylvia remembered. Mr. Poppleteed was a small thin man with big, sad eyes. Doggy eyes, Sylvia thought. He did odd

jobs like grass-cutting and putting up storm windows. He had some sort of an illness which kept him from doing steady work.

"Mr. Poppleteed has been very ill," Mrs. Adams said. "Your father and I thought, because of its being Christmas..."

Sylvia could stand it no longer. "Mom," she interrupted, "And Dad, too. I know just what I want for a present. Only one thing. It can be from the both of you." Sylvia clasped her hands tightly and tilted her chair back from the table. Her eyes were closed as she visualized the dream dress again.

"It's in the Bon-bon's window right now," she said. "It's the most glorious, most beautiful, most absitively, posolutely terrifical dress I ever saw." Her eyes opened and she looked pleadingly at her parents. "It's absolutely the only thing I want for Christmas," she breathed slowly. "I'll just die if I can't have it."

Mr. Adams was staring into his coffee cup. "That's exactly what we wanted to talk to you about, Sylvia," he said. "Your mother and I thought, provided, of course, that you were willing, that we wouldn't give each other any Christmas presents this year at all. We thought, if you were willing, that we'd use the money to buy food and some other things for the Poppleteeds."

Sylvia's eyes were stinging. She knew in a minute she was going to cry.

"No," she said, banging her fork on the table. "No," she repeated. "I won't have my Christmas spoiled for any old Poppyseeds." Hurt and anger made her throat ache and her lips feel stiff.

"Sylvia, dear, there's no need to get so angry," her mother said slowly. She kept her voice very even, but Sylvia could hear the disappointment in it. "I'm sure it's a very lovely dress and we'll get it for you tomorrow first thing."

Tomorrow. They would get the dress first thing tomorrow. Happiness swept over Sylvia in a big wave of joy. Her mother was still talking, but Sylvia hardly listened.

"After all," Mrs. Adams said, "Christmas means different things to different people. I suppose when you're sixteen..." She stopped. Sylvia's father leaned over and patted her mother's hand.

Parents, Sylvia thought indignantly. They never really understood the important things. They never seemed to remember what it was like to be sixteen and want pretty dresses and enjoy dancing and parties. Queen Christmas; in her lovely blue dress, she would be Queen Christmas, and Tommy would be King.

The dress fit as if it had been designed for Sylvia alone. Her blonde hair looked even blonder; the ocean blue of the dress made her eyes seem wider and deeper blue than they really were.

"Oh, mother," Sylvia breathed happily, "it's the most wonderful present I'll ever have."

"I'll remember this Christmas when I'm sixty," Sylvia promised, whirling happily in front of the mirror in the Bon-bon's fitting room. "My Christmas present," she explained happily to the clerk.

"Oh?" The woman smiled. "A very lovely present."

"What are you giving your mother?" she asked in a mock-stage whisper, and Sylvia remembered and she stopped in the middle of a smile. She glanced at her mother, sitting with her gloved hands folded quietly on her lap. Her mother's eyes seemed to be looking at her deeply, challenging her.

"Well," she whispered defiantly, mimicking the clerk's stage voice, "it's a rather difficult question. You see, I've got unusual parents. They don't really believe in Christmas presents at all."

Something was the matter with Betty Lou's party that night, Sylvia decided. It had no spirit, no life.

"What's the matter, chicken?" Tommy asked as he brought her another coke. "Who's got troubles at Christmas?"

"It's my parents," Sylvia admitted. "Gosh, parents can get you down."

Tommy was sympathetic. "They sure can," he agreed. "Of course, my old man and I get along pretty well now, but I can remember when..." His voice trailed off. "I think it's a stage," he said seriously. "I think there's a point when all of a sudden you and your father and mother don't see eye to eye at all."

"It passes," he finished. "Don't worry about it, chick. It'll pass."

Sylvia found herself pouring out the story of the dress, and the Poppyseeds, and her parents' plan to give up personal presents. Tommy listened quietly.

"What did you decide to do?" he asked when she had finished.

"Don't worry, Tommy," Sylvia said. "I wouldn't want the handsomest boy at the Ski Ball to be dragging a date in an old tacky dress. Anyway, you spilled ginger ale on my formal the last time I wore it, remember? I owe it to you to look my very best," she finished, smiling up at him.

"It's your decision, chicken," Tommy said. "Comes a time when no one can help you make up your mind on things like that."

Honestly, Sylvia thought, Tommy could be infuriating. Most of the time he was terrific, a real pal. But sometimes he seemed suddenly to remember that he was seventeen and a half, almost eighteen months older than she. Then he became all serious and solemn, sort of like her parents. "Come on," she said wearily. "Let's dance. At times you're terribly pokey, Tommy."

The light was still on in her parents' room when Sylvia came in. Usually Sylvia went in and reported on the doings of the evening. Somehow tonight she didn't feel like it at all. "Hello and goodnight," she called, and went straight to her room. The soft, level hum of her parents' voices came indistinctly into her room. Sylvia got out of bed and opened her door.

"We could give up our shore week," her mother was saying.

"And I don't really need that fishing week every spring," her father said. "Frankly, I'm sort of tired of fishing anyway."

Her father tired of fishing! Who was teasing whom? Sylvia moved out into the hall so as not to miss a word.

"John," her mother said tenderly, "you're a very poor liar. The dress was rather more expensive than I'd expected, but Sylvia had her heart set on it so. I'll do all the shopping tomorrow. The Poppleteeds need so many things."

Sylvia didn't want to hear anymore. It wasn't fair of her parents, she thought as she got into bed. It was easy to be righteous and self sacrificing when you didn't really care. But Christmas time was for fun, and the Ski Ball was the biggest dance of the year. But her father giving up his fishing week! The two oval picture-frames next to her bureau looked like Mr. Poppleteed's eyes,

big and sad and doggy, Sylvia thought, as she sank into the misty softness of sleep.

Dinner the next evening was rather unpleasant as far as Sylvia was concerned. Mr. and Mrs. Adams talked quietly to each other.

"There wasn't enough left for Mrs. Poppleteed's coat," Mrs. Adams said. "I ordered the food and got some things for the baby. If only Mr. Poppleteed's doctor bills weren't so high!"

How rude of them to ignore her, Sylvia thought. Why, they were treating her like a criminal, or a thief, or something. "How old is the baby?" she asked. "And why aren't you including me in your conversation?"

"From the grumpy look on your face, Sylvia, we thought you didn't want to be disturbed," her mother said gently. "The baby's about four months old."

"What can I get them?" Sylvia asked. "I mean, I've returned the presents I got for you and Dad. What can I get the Poppleteeds instead?" She emphasized Poppleteed ever so slightly.

"They need almost everything," Mr. Adams said. "I imagine another ton or so of coal would be a good present."

"Dad!" Sylvia was horrified. "Are they really that badly off?" Mr. Adams nodded, and the rest of the meal passed in uncomfortable silence.

The next day was the day before Christmas and the stores were gay with last minute shoppers.

"Well, it's rather irregular," Mr. Simpson, the manager of the dress department said. "After all, your mother bought the dress. Are you sure she'd want you to return it."

Sylvia found to her surprise that she was crying. Mr. Simpson supplied a big white handkerchief and listened patiently while Sylvia told him about the Ski Ball, and the Poppleteeds, and how Mr. Poppleteed had been so sick and had no job.

Mr. Simpson asked a funny question when she finished. "How old are you?" he asked.

"Sixteen," she said. "I was sixteen last month."

"You're a fine woman, my dear," he said. "Excuse me for a minute. There's a phone call I've got to make."

A fine woman he called her. Not a girl or a young lady. She was still turning the words over in her mind when Mr. Simpson returned.

"Sylvia," he said pleasantly, "the Bon-bon has sort of a special Christmas fund. I was just talking to Mr. Carlisle, our president. I told him about the Poppleteeds," he said, pronouncing the name as carefully as Sylvia had to.

"I also told him you were sixteen and had blue

eyes," he added irrelevantly. "With the Bon-bon's best wishes for a merry Christmas to you and to the Poppleteeds, we'd like to refund the money for the dress and then give you the dress for a present."

Sylvia was hardly able to believe what Mr. Simpson was saying. How wonderful; how perfectly wonderful! Then from somewhere an echo of her mother's voice sounded in her ears.

"Thanks, Mr. Simpson," she said. "And I'd like you to thank Mr. Carlisle for me. But Mrs. Poppleteed needs a winter coat so badly. I'd rather have her come in and choose a coat, if it's all right with the Bon-bon."

If Sylvia had looked closely at Mr. Simpson right then she would have thought he had a terribly bad cold. His eyes were sort of red and he blew his nose before he answered.

"Certainly, my dear," he said. "And a very, very merry Christmas to you and to the Poppleteeds."

Dinner for a change was gay and full of chatter. Sylvia realized with amazement that she felt happier than she had for days. Her parents beamed at her, and it was pleasant to have the family all friendly and joking together.

"Oh my gosh," Sylvia said suddenly, dropping her spoon so that a stewed peach slithered across the table like a goldfish. "I forgot to call Tommy," she said. "I forgot to call him and tell him I can't go to the dance."

It really was a most surprising Christmas Eve. Tommy wasn't even angry.

"Could I come with you to the Poppleteeds?" he asked. "Then if there's time later, we can sort of look in on the dance. Honestly, Sylvia, as long as I'm with you, I don't care what you're wearing."

Mr. Poppleteed's eyes were even bigger than Sylvia remembered them. Mrs. Poppleteed was small and dark like her husband. The baby was blond and very tiny. The Poppleteeds were so terribly grateful. Mr. Poppleteed kept repeating in a dazed kind of way, "I'll pay it all back, you wonderful, unselfish peoples." Sylvia was afraid she was going to cry. She held Tommy's hand very tightly. He squeezed her fingers, and she saw his eyes were bright too.

Some carolers passed outside on the little street singing *Hark, the herald angels sing*. They all joined in, there in the Poppleteeds' little kitchen. Mrs. Poppleteed sat in a little chair, giving the baby a bottle.

Peace on earth, good will to men. Their voices filled the little kitchen. Not far away, church bells

began to ring. Sylvia realized suddenly and deeply that it was Christmas Eve. The kitchen felt absolutely holy.

"Mother," she whispered, "now I'm really sure I'll remember this Christmas when I'm sixty."

"And, mother," she added, "I know what you meant when you said Christmas can mean a lot of different things to different people." The smile in her mother's eyes gave her the same peculiar feeling she'd had when Mr. Simpson called her a fine woman.

Light from a lamp on the little table shone through the baby's hair, making it look like a halo.

"Why, she looks like a saint," Sylvia thought with amazement. She started to poke Tommy, but she could tell he saw it too.

"Mary," Mr. Poppleteed said slowly, "how can we thank these people?"

"Joseph," his wife answered him, "there are things too big for words."

"God bless you all," she said, and the baby in her lap smiled and waved its little hands.

CHRISTMAS ON THE AIR

From St. Meinrad

The Pontifical Midnight Mass on Christmas will once again be broadcast from Saint Meinrad's Abbey through the facilities of Station W H A S 840 on your dial Louisville, Kentucky. The broadcast will present the entire Midnight Mass and will last about one hour.

From Hollywood

The 1949 Joyful Hour broadcast of the Family Rosary will be heard over the Mutual Network on the night of Sunday, December 18. In 1947 and 1948 the Joyful Hour was voted the outstanding broadcast on the Mutual Network.

AMERICAN CHRISTMAS

He buys his wife a winter coat,
Himself he gives a hat;
His boy receives a pair of skates,
And that is that.

No More? Oh, yes. A holly wreath
He hangs upon his door,
And just for old times' sake a spruce
Stands on the floor.

And then? Well, cards by hundreds
go
To neighbor and to friend
To wish for health and Yuletide joy
Without an end.

No more does Christmas mean?
Well, he
Is quite an epicure,
And so the pantry holds good food
And choice liqueur.

No more? Yes, late at night he
hears
The songs of long ago—
The Christmas carols coming
through
His radio.

And as he smokes his pipe, he
smiles
And feels himself content.
The world may be at war, but he
Has paid his rent.

Alas! No more? Has he not
glimpsed
The meaning of it all?
The carols and the ribboned gifts
Piled up so tall?

Poor soul! No one has told him yet
How Christ was born for him
Upon a wondrous hour made bright
With Cherubim.

And so, untaught as wife and son,
He has no words to say
Unto a little Child come down
This Christmas Day.

—Mary Fabyan Windeatt
reprint from *Sing Joyfully!*



THE CHRISTMAS TREE

by George Sanderlin

The old man was so tired and cold,
and Angelo was not there
to help him sell his trees to the fine ladies and gentlemen.

THE vacant lot between the delicatessen and the shoe shop, usually an eyesore of blown newspapers and abandoned tin cans, was transformed into a piny wood, fragrant with the spirit of the season.

"Christmas trees! All right, folks, get your fine Christmas trees right here!"

Pietro Bordone clapped his blue, wrinkled hands together to keep them warm.

"All right folks!" he cried, in a big, cheerful voice that belied his small, poorly-clothed figure.

"How much do you want?" shrieked a stout woman, through the whistling, icy wind.

"Dollar. Dollar and a half. Two dollars." Pietro tagged the different specimens with a trembling finger. "Here, now, is a very fine tree—"

"Robbery!" screamed the stout lady. "Downtown I saw some for seventy-five cents."

"But these trees come from Maine," Pietro explained.

"They look like they came a long way," snorted the lady. "Scrub! I could grow a better one in my flower pot!"

The icy wind blew her on her way. Pietro shrugged his shoulders wearily and hunched further into his thin coat, holding it together with one hand.

Perhaps the lady was right, though he had bought the best trees he could find. Possibly he

himself had been cheated. Pietro Bordone, business man—that was a joke. Things had been different back in the old days, when he had run the flower stand by the movie theatre with fat little Angelo hopping about like a bird arranging the green vases and drawing the fine ladies and gentlemen to look and to buy. Angelo, the smartest boy the good Lord had ever sent to help a busy papa...

Pietro shivered and crouched in the shelter of his trees.

Angelo. The old man clasped his hands together, as the wind whirled the snow past in gusts. The passengers alighting from the crowded streetcars hurried along with bent heads, not even glancing at Pietro's trees.

Angelo had grown up from being a chubby, cherub-faced little boy. Angelo had gone across the ocean to fight for his country. Angelo had come home, with the flags lowered and the bugles muted and the dense throngs silent in the streets...

"Ah, Angelo!" whispered the old man, beating his hands together.

The flakes blinded him. He heard a voice, so close that he started. He brushed his eyes with the rough, shapeless sleeve—and there stood a chubby, laughing, black-haired little boy with eyes as bright as a bird's.

"Eh?" said the bewildered old man.

"I want to buy one of your Christmas trees,"

repeated the little boy, solemnly. The edges of a few silver coins protruded from his tightly-clutched fist. "How much do they cost?"

"Eh—Angelo—eh?" Pietro shook his head. Mechanically, he went on, "Dollar—dollar and a half—"

Pietro's eyes suddenly cleared. He broke off. He saw the little boy's mouth begin to droop, then straighten, and he saw the scant, silver coins clutched in the small hand that went back now into a pocket.

Pietro beckoned the little boy, and winked cheerfully.

"This one," he said, sharing a closely-guarded secret, pointing to the tallest, greenest, most beautifully proportioned tree on the lot, "it cost fifty cents. Eh?"

The little boy's eyes widened the width of the topmost cone.

"I'll take that one," he said with breathless decision. He thrust out the coins. "Here!"

Pietro chuckled. Something was wrong with his head. The cold was making it ache, dully, agonizingly. Angelo had always known a bargain, too! Angelo...

"Eh?" whispered Pietro Bordone.

Something was happening to the tree! It stood, propped against the wall of Mike's Delicatessen, its graceful branches sweeping and concealing the sooty brick, its lordly peak piercing the frankfurter sign. But now it seemed to be tilting, forward, toward Pietro. Tilting until it stood erect, as on the crest of its native mountains. And the branches—

"Holy Mother," whispered Pietro Bordone.

The icy wind died away. The flakes ceased to whirl through the bitter air. And the green needles of the tree faded and then sparkled, sun-gold, glowing with a soft radiance like incense.

Pietro was borne, as in a dream, beneath the golden tree. It was another Christmas, an earlier, happier Christmas. And the little boy who looked up at him out of laughing brown eyes—it was, it *was* Angelo!

"Eh?" chuckled Pietro. "And what do you think is in this package?"

"A train!" whooped Angelo. His fingers trembled with eagerness on the cords. A red streamliner protruded through the broken ends. I *knew* it would be a train!"

"It cost Santa Claus much money," Pietro said solemnly. "You must be very careful—I do not think he could find another one."

"Oh, I will, Papa!" Angelo promised.

"See, it has the wind-up—and track, too." Pietro forgot Santa's train shortage and was energetically

twisting the key about when Angelo warned him. "Not too tight, papa!"

"Eh? Ah, this one more turn will make it shoot faster!" Pietro replied gleefully.

And how it shot! Like a red streak, between Pietro and Angelo on the worn carpet.

It was the prize, of course. No other present could be more than a ten-cent gift; but did Angelo mind? Not his fine boy! thought Pietro, rubbing his eyes and blowing his nose vigorously as Angelo exclaimed over the rubber ball and small toy automobile.

"Oh, papa, I wish mamma were here!" Angelo exclaimed, suddenly, from the midst of his toys.

Pietro rubbed again at his eyes. His voice was gentle. "Ah, she sees, my Angelo." And to himself he thought, "How good the good Lord has been to me, that I have my fine Angelo to make up for Maria."

The boy's mind, darting as swiftly as the red streamliner, was already on another track.

"When I grow up," he announced, his eyes glowing, "I am going to run a train just like this one, Papa. I am going to be a crack engineer!"

"Ah!" exclaimed Pietro delightedly. "Then I will come to ride with you in the caboose!"

"Not the caboose—you mean the cab," Angelo said.

"Cab—caboose—calaboose—what is the difference?" Pietro objected. "Ah, Angelo, when you are a big man—"

And to himself, he was thinking: "And you will not be an engineer, either. Not my Angelo. A doctor, perhaps—or a priest, my gentle Angelo. Or—"

When Angelo grew up. What was there about that thought to bring the chill under Pietro's breast, this happy Christmas Day? What was that muted sound growing stronger, rattling the windowpanes now, blurring the golden tree—

"Angelo! Angelo!"

Blindly, Pietro reached out for his smiling little boy. Blindly, he lunged forward to crush him in his arms, his own flesh and blood, his own Angelo.

"Papa. I had a wonderful Christmas..."

The words were Angelo's. But the gold of the tree was gone. The little boy was fading, fading back into infinite perspectives. And in the foreground, the icy wind burst the windowpanes, howled with arctic fury across the bleak room, in which the curtains snapped and thundered like the crash of artillery-fire on blood-edged hills...

"Tommy, you know where Dr. Barnes lives? I want you to run quick, and bring him—"

"Eh?" said Pietro weakly.

(Continued on page 378)

How to Give Your Home

THAT CHRISTMAS LOOK

*Christmas is not only a feast day,
It is also a time when the spirit of play
and childlikeness runs riot in home decorations.*

Here are fourteen ways of making your home more "Christmassy".

THE true spirit of Christmas is friendliness, and that can be extended in various ways. Decorating the house is a charming way of spreading Christmas cheer to all those who enter. And you have an opportunity of extending a message of cheer to those merely passing by your home by properly decorating your window panes.

Let the children help in decorating the windows, which is easily done when supervised by a grownup. First, paint the entire glass surface with white showcard paint which has been thinned with water. After it has thoroughly dried symbols of Yuletide may be etched with the finger or a small stick. Santa Claus, angels, bells, reindeer, Christmas trees and snowmen are only a few of the many designs that would look pretty on each window pane. If you do not happen to have drawing talent, first trace the designs and then etch them.

Window silhouettes are another way to produce pleasing decorations. Choose some Bible theme—Mary, Joseph and the Christ-Child, with animals nearby; Wise Men on camels following the star; shepherds with their flocks, are always pretty and appropriate. Trace or copy design

on plain paper, cut out and fasten to window with cellophane. Now cover glass with the showcard paint or Bon Ami, which should be applied with small sponge, making it as smooth as possible. Now remove outline and you will be delighted with your silhouette. Or if you prefer, make your pattern of black paper, apply the paint or Bon Ami over the glass and let it all remain on the window. These silhouettes are equally attractive by daylight or artificial light. Christmas scenes on mirrors with Bon Ami are also quite effective...

by Jewell Casey

A good way to show off your Christmas cards, also giving a colorful touch is by making a wall hanging of them. Put up a piece of insulation board painted or covered in red or green, or a yard square of red or green cloth, and framed with evergreen sprigs and bright red berries or ribbon bows. As each card arrives remove it from the envelope and thumbtack it to the hanging. Guests, as well as the family will enjoy this...

Attractive holiday candle holders

may be fashioned in this manner: Drip a little melted wax into the bottom of red, white or green individual baking bowls. Hold candle on melted wax until set, then fill bowl with salt. White or colored candles may be used equally effectively...

For table or sideboard make two cornucopias of half circles of cardboard, either painting or lining inside with red paper and painting outside gold or silver. Fill them to overflowing with assorted colorful fruits and nuts. Place small sprigs of evergreen between the cornucopias and around the bases of two tall red candles. This is a lovely decoration that will endure throughout the entire season...

Blue or red cellophane over a white tablecloth is not only colorful and pretty, but will save the tablecloth! And for something different, sew tiny bells along the hem of your linen cloth so at the least movement there will be a gay tinkling...

A snowy Christmas tree may be made by pouring cool cooked starch over branches and immediately sprinkling literally with artificial snow. Let dry, then decorate according to taste...

For those who are fortunate enough to have a wood-burning fireplace, here is an excellent way of having a most colorful fire of assorted colors. If you have pine cones, or even small pieces of dry wood, prepare them in this manner. Obtain from your druggist one pound each of the following: Copper sulphate for green flame; barium nitrate for blue flame; strontium nitrate for red flame; potassium permanganate for purple flame; put each chemical in a container holding a gallon of water. Assort your cones or wood into equal numbers; drop a given number into each of the four containers, remove and lay on papers to dry. Use when thoroughly dry, and just listen to the delighted gasps of surprise from your guests when they see the colored flames that shoot from your specially treated firewood. . .

Favors for the Christmas party or dinner will lend atmosphere to the table, and adults as well as children love favors—something they may take home with them.

Miniature Santa Clauses, always appropriate, are easily made. For the body select a firm red apple. Arms and legs made from two marshmallows or gumdrops, are fastened together and to the body with wooden skewers. From a piece of gumdrop or marshmallow fashion a neck and another will make the head, which can be secured with a toothpick. Use whole cloves for eyes and cranberry or red candy for mouth and nose. Bits of fluffy cotton may be used effectively for whiskers, hair and waistcoat. Make the toboggan cap of crepe paper—be sure and add the tassel!

Attractive favors may be made out of halves of walnut shells. Paint them red, green, gold or silver. In the center of each shell anchor a tiny candle with melted wax. If the little candles are lighted just as the guests enter the dining-room, a cheerful note will greet them. . .

Corsages, either as favors or gifts for the tree, may be made of evergreen sprigs, bright berries, nuts, acorns, tiny pine cones, assorted grasses, and small bells. Finish by

adding perky ribbon bows of either red, green, gold, or silver, and will prove quite pleasing to those who receive them. . .

Pine cone owls—using one pine cone for body and large end half of another cone for the head. Fasten the head to the body with small wire or hair pin. Use buttons for eyes and nose, and bits of the cone can be formed into "horns." These cunning ornaments may be used on the tree or in a centerpiece for table or for favors.

Peanut People—Santa Clauses, Angels, Dutch boys and girls, as well as various animals are easily made. Select a single peanut in the shell for a head, then a double or triple peanut for the body and shorter ones for arms and legs. "Sew" them together by using darning needle and twine. Crepe paper or scraps

of cloth may be used for clothes. Wool yarn is used for the hair, and the faces may be drawn with crayon or pencil. Peanut People and animals are especially pleasing decorations for the tree. . .

Remember that Christmas is not all it should be to you unless you include sharing of your *home* and *yourself* with others less fortunate than yourself. Don't fail to remember those who have served you in various ways all the year—ones we're likely to forget—the newsboy; the librarian; your beauty operator—or barber; your favorite salesperson and others who have been especially kind to you.

Write letters to old friends and send more Christmas cards than ever before. Select your cards so they convey a message of Christian love. Let us enjoy Christmas this year by spreading Christmas cheer!



You never enjoy the world aright

till you see how a sand exhibiteth the wisdom and power of God: and prize in everything the service which they do you, by manifesting his glory and goodness to your soul, far more than the visible beauty on their surface, or the material services they can do your body. Wine by its moisture quencheth my thirst, whether I consider it or no: but to see it flowing from his love who gave it unto man, quencheth the thirst even of the holy angels. To consider it is to drink it spiritually. To rejoice in its diffusion is to be of a public mind. And to take pleasure in all the benefits it doth to all is heavenly, for so they do in heaven. To do so, is to be divine and good, and to imitate our infinite and eternal Father.

—Thomas Traherne,
Centuries of Meditations

MURALS OF

Hidden away in a tiny chapel of the Archbishop's residence in Indianapolis there is a group of murals that are remarkable for their color and vigor of design. Through the courtesy of Miss Marie Lauck we obtained photographs of some of the murals, one of which is used as our cover for this month. Although much of the beauty of the little chapel and its murals could be seen only in full color reproductions, we thought that a brief description and a few pictures in black and white would be of interest to our readers.



The theme of the chapel murals is the redemption of man through the coming of Christ. The ceiling panels reproduced on this page represent the most important Old Testament personalities in the Divine Plan of Redemption. The figures are strikingly placed in the chapel so that they all face the altar in order to symbolize their looking forward to the coming of the promised Redeemer.

ADAM WAS OF GOD

The first picture on the left-hand page shows Adam, the father of the human race. It was his sin which made a Redeemer necessary, and it was to him that the promise of Christ's coming was first announced. The inscription aptly shows his complete dependence on God.

EVE, THE MOTHER OF THE LIVING

Below Adam is pictured his companion and helpmate, Eve, the mother of the human race. She holds in her hand the forbidden fruit which the serpent persuaded her to eat. It was she who first heard the words of hope when God said to the serpent: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."

AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED EMMANUEL

Next we see Isaias whose prophecies so vividly describe the Savior to come that he has been called the Evangelist of the Old Testament. Who has not marveled at the clarity and beauty of his words: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel." "Emmanuel" means "God with us."

THE REDEMPTION

DANIEL YOU ARE A MAN OF DESIRES

On the right hand page we see Daniel, another of the Old Testament Prophets who saw in his visions dim foreshadowings of the promised Redeemer. This painting of Daniel with his hands raised in an expression of wonder shows how even the hazy prophetic vision of the God-man to come ravished the minds and hearts of men.

A HORN OF SALVATION TO US IN THE HOUSE OF DAVID

In his psalms David, too, sang eloquently of the long-awaited Savior. In Psalm Two he foretells Christ's universal reign when he says in Christ's name, "The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, Ask of me and I will give thee the gentiles for thy inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession."

SOLOMON OF HER WHO HAD BEEN THE WIFE OF URIAS

The last of the Old Testament characters pictured in the panels is Solomon, whose words about wisdom were eminently fulfilled in Christ the wisdom of God.

The two large murals on either wall of the chapel show the culmination of the long period of expectation and prophecy. The scene on the right of the chapel, which is reproduced on the next page, portrays for us the Archangel Gabriel interrupting Mary's prayer to tell her the most momentous news of all time. He asks her to consent to be the mother of the long-awaited Word of God. She did consent, and the Word was made flesh in her by the Holy Spirit.

On the left wall of the chapel is the Nativity scene, which is used as our cover this month.



The artist,

Dom

Gregory De Wit

O.S.B.





Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee

OUR LADY OF MONTICHIARI

"WHEN THE GOOD AS WELL AS THE WICKED ARE UNITED IN PRAYER, THEY WILL OBTAIN MERCY FROM MY HEART. AT PRESENT, THROUGH MY INTERCESSION THE GOOD HAVE OBTAINED FROM THE LORD A GREAT MERCY WHICH HAS STOPPED A GREAT TRIBULATION." THUS SPOKE OUR LADY AT MONTICHIARI ON DECEMBER 8, 1947.

by

Francis Busch

WELL informed Catholic sources in Europe have recently disclosed that the Blessed Virgin is believed to have appeared to a devout Sister of Charity at Montichiari in Northern Italy eleven times between November 24, 1946, and December 8, 1947. In the course of these Apparitions, the Mother of God is said to have: (1) imparted a special message and devotion called ROSA MYSTICA for all priests and religious, (2) explained why the Apparitions at Bonate in 1944 have not received ecclesiastical approval, and (3) requested that an Hour of Grace be instituted at noon on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in every Catholic church throughout the world. And as if to link the message of Fatima with that of Montichiari, in the Apparition of December 7, 1947, Our Lady was accompanied by Francisco and Jacinta, the saintly children of Fatima who died in 1919 and 1920 respectively.

The Blessed Virgin began her series of great modern Apparitions in 1830, when she gave her Miraculous Medal to a humble French Sister of Charity, St. Catherine Laboure. Now in 1946 she has again appeared to a Daughter of St. Vincent de Paul, thirty five year old Sister Pierina Gilli, a nursing nun at the hospital of the Sisters of Charity in the small town of Montichiari near Brescia, between Milan and Venice.

During 1946 Sister Pierina was spiritually prepared for the coming Apparitions of Mary by numerous supernatural interventions of Blessed Maria Crocifissa di Rosa, the foundress of the Sisters of Charity of Brescia. Then, in seven Apparitions between November 24, 1946 and October 22, 1947, the Mother of God herself explained to the nun by

symbolic visions and exact instructions a new devotion called ROSA MYSTICA, "the Marian devotion which Our Lord had sent her to bring to all religious Orders and Congregations of men and women and also to secular priests." In the presence of priests representing the Ordinary of the Diocese, Mary gave the Sister an "exterior sign" which has been kept in the chapel in which it was granted. An ecclesiastical

Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from *The Scapular* October 1949, with permission of the editors. This amazing story of Montichiari, Italy, from the pen of an author of international Marian renown, Francis Busch, we pass on as coming from the best of sources, without guarantee, in accordance with the decrees of Pope Benedict XIV.

investigation is at present studying this first series of Apparitions with its special but undisclosed message for priests and religious.

A general message for Italy and for the world was contained in the second cycle of four Apparitions between November 16 and December 8, 1947.

While Sister Pierina was making her thanksgiving after Holy Communion on the morning of November 16 in the large 18th-century parish church of Montichiari, she suddenly perceived an unusually bright light which made her raise her eyes. Then she saw the Blessed Virgin as the ROSA MYSTICA, as in the previous Apparitions. The nun rose to her feet and stepped forward, until an irresistible force made her kneel on the floor under the high dome of the church.

Our Lady said to her:

"Our Lord, my divine Son, is tired of being greatly offended by men through sins against holy purity. He is inclined to command a deluge of retribution. I have interceded in order that He may exercise mercy. I therefore request prayers and penances in reparation for those sins."

Motioning to the Sister to approach, Mary asked her to perform an act of humiliation (as she had asked Bernadette at Lourdes), saying:

"As a sign of purification and penance, make a cross with your tongue on four adjacent stones on the floor. These stones must later be inclosed in memory of my visit, so that they are no longer stepped upon."

While the nun obeyed, the Mother of God descended onto the marble stones until her robe touched them. Then, after giving Sister Pierina a personal message, she added:

"This is why Our Lord, my Divine Son, Jesus, withdrew His graces from Bonate: because that consecrated place, instead of being a shrine of prayer, was desecrated and became a plague of sin against holy purity, and so the reality of my presence is denied."

When the Sister asked whether it had been the fault of the little girl, Adelaide Roncalli, who claimed she had seen Mary at Bonate, the reply was: "No. It was on account of those sins."

And the Blessed Virgin ended the Apparition by making some recommendations for the prevention and reparation of sins of impurity.

On November 22, an interior voice summoned Pierina to the church at 4 p.m. She was accompanied by her Mother Superior,

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four nuns, and a group of friends.

After they had recited a rosary, the Blessed Virgin appeared as before. Again she told the Sister to make four crosses on the stones with her tongue and to have the space inclosed by a railing. Pierina was given another personal secret. Then Our Lady requested prayers and penances for the sins of Italy. And she added this definition of the kind of penances that she meant:

"Penance is to accept every day all your little crosses as well as your work as a sign of penance."

She also stated that at Bonate public expiatory ceremonies would have to be requested of the Bishop before the grace of God would return there. Then she announced:

"On December 8, I will again come here in the parish church. It will be an Hour of Graces."

When asked what would happen, she replied:

"It will effect great and numerous conversions."

"How should we prepare ourselves for it?"

"By prayer and penance. Recite the Psalm MISERERE three times, holding your arms out in the form of a cross."

When the nursing Sister asked about cures, Our Lady said:

"Spiritual graces will be granted. Moreover he who brings tears of repentance to these stones will obtain great mercy from my Divine Son, Jesus, through my intercession. Souls that are hardened and cold like this marble will be touched by divine grace and will become faithful and true lovers of the Lord."

After again urging that the four stones be protected from profanation, the Blessed Virgin disappeared.

During the morning of December 7, Sister Pierina was interiorly instructed to be in church at noon. Her Mother Superior and a priest went with her.

This time Our Lady was accompanied by a very beautiful young boy and girl dressed in white, whom the nun thought were two angels. Mary explained that this Apparition was a reward for the three persons present, as they would have to suffer a great deal for her cause. And she announced to Sister Pierina:



The Town of Montichiari

"Tomorrow I will show you my Immaculate Heart, which is so little known among men."

During one of the preceding Apparitions the Mother of God had promised to return "in order to explain Fatima, Bonate, and Montichiari: Fatima, where I came for the whole world and for the conversion of sinners; Bonate, where I came for the sanctification of Christian families; Brescia-Montichiari, where I have come for the sanctification of religious souls." She now fulfilled this promise in the following words:

"At Fatima I made the devotion to my Immaculate Heart spread throughout the world... at Bonate I tried to make it penetrate into the Christian family... here, however, at Montichiari, I desire that the devotion already called 'ROSA MYSTICA,' together with the devotion to my Heart, should be practiced in Religious communities, in order that Religious Souls may draw more abundant graces from my Heart. With this Apparition for the sanctification of Religious Souls, I am drawing to a close the cycle of Apparitions of Fatima-Bonate-Montichiari."

After receiving another personal message, Pierina transmitted a question about the Italian soldiers who were detained as prisoners-of-war in Russia and whose families

had not heard from them. The Blessed Virgin replied:

"People will have to pray a great deal for the conversion of Russia... the sacrifices, the sufferings, and also the martyrdom of those soldiers—that is what will bring tranquility and peace to Italy."

To Sister Pierina's intense surprise Our Lady then revealed that the two children with her were Jacinta and Francisco, whom she gave to the nun as companions in the tribulations that were ahead for her, as they, too, had suffered similarly after the Apparitions of Fatima.

"They will help you," said Mary. "This is what I desire of you: simplicity and kindness as in these little children."

Then, after giving her blessing to the two nuns and the priest, she vanished.

Meanwhile news of the promised Apparition on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception had spread far and wide. Consequently at eight o'clock on the morning of December 8, 1947, the large parish church of Montichiari was filled with a crowd of men, women, and children from all parts of Lombardy, Venetia, and Emilia. By eleven-thirty about ten thousand persons were crammed into the church or standing outside.

Just before noon, Sister Pierina arrived with her mother and brother,

the Mother Superior, and the chief of police. When she reached the center of the church, under the great dome, she began to recite the Rosary and then the MISERERE, accompanied by the faithful.

Suddenly Sister Pierina perceived in the center of a bright light a white staircase about fifteen yards long and five yards wide, with long clusters of white, red, and yellow roses as banisters on each side. At the top of the stairs, in the middle of a garden filled with thick white, red, and yellow roses forming a magnificent floral carpet, there appeared in a niche of roses of the same colors the beautiful Mother of God as the radiant ROSA MYSTICA, dressed in white, with her hands joined and her feet standing on the carpet of roses.

The Blessed Virgin smiled and said:

"I am the Immaculate Conception. I am Mary of Graces, Mother of the Divine Son, Jesus. I wish to be called ROSA MYSTICA. I desire that every year on December 8th, at noon, a universal Hour of Grace be held. Numerous spiritual and physical graces will be obtained through this practice."

As Sister Pierina exclaimed: "Yes," the Madonna slowly came down the stairs spreading roses about her, until she reached the middle of the stairway. The nun could see Mary's bare feet on the steps. Our Lady then declared that she was pleased with the great demonstration of faith of the crowd. And when Sister Pierina begged for forgiveness on behalf of the people, Mary said:

"Our Lord, my Divine Son, Jesus, grants His greatest mercy as long as the good continue to pray for their sinning brethren."

In the name of the faithful, the nun promised to love Mary more and to avoid sin.

Then the Mother of God continued:

"Let it be reported as soon as possible to the Sovereign Father of the Catholic Church, Pope Pius XII, that I desire that this Hour of Grace be granted to the whole world. Those who cannot go to their Church will obtain graces from me while remain-

ing in their homes and praying at noon."

The Blessed Virgin also expressed her wish that the four stones be inclosed by an iron railing, and that a statue be made of her as the ROSA MYSTICA, which is to be carried throughout Italy, spreading graces and cures as it passes, and then to be placed on the four stones in the church at Montichiari.

Next Sister Pierina was deeply impressed as she saw Mary raise her forefinger and say with a severe expression:

"Ah, Bonate ... Bonate! Lack of faith!"

While the Madonna remained very serious, yet silent, Sister Pierina prayed that the little Roncalli girl might become good and holy, and Mary smiled without answering.

When the nursing nun asked for graces for some sick persons who had promised to live good lives, the Mother of God said:

"Some cures will be granted."

At that very moment several sick men, women, and children in the church felt themselves instantaneously healed. Among them were a woman of twenty six who had lost her voice for nine years but now recovered it and exclaimed that she saw a great light, and a girl of eighteen suffering from a stomach-ulcer who smelled a strong scent of roses and felt herself cured. A boy of five afflicted with infantile paralysis declared that he saw the Madonna saying to him: "Walk. Then you will walk better." When placed on the four sacred stones he began to walk and described the Madonna exactly as the nun saw her. Three bed-ridden patients in the town who were suffering, respectively, from multiple cancer, meningo-typhoid, and peritonitis, were cured at the same time.

Meanwhile Our Lady of Montichiari told Sister Pierina that this was her last Apparition. And she explained the symbolism of the stairway in these words:

"Whoever prays and sheds tears of repentance on these stones will find a sure stairway to obtain protection and graces from my maternal Heart."

Then, opening her arms, the

Mother of God revealed to the nun her radiant IMMACULATE HEART, on which were fixed a white, a red, and a yellow rose. Rays of light streaming from Mary's Heart were so bright and penetrating that they dazzled the Sister, who cried out:

"Oh! The Immaculate Heart of Mary!"

Then the Blessed Virgin said:

"Here is this Heart that loves men so much, while most of them in return give It nothing but offenses."

Sister Pierina again promised in the name of the faithful to love Mary and to avoid sin.

And the Mother of God continued:

"When the good as well as the wicked are united in prayer, they will obtain mercy and peace from this Heart. At present, through my intercession, the good have obtained from the Lord a grant of mercy which has stopped a great tribulation."

Then Our Lady of Montichiari smiled, and becoming still more radiant with happiness she said these last deeply significant words:

"In a short while the greatness of this Hour of Grace will be known."

Subsequently the Bishop of Brescia instituted an investigation of the Apparitions and Messages and cures. An official pronouncement by ecclesiastical authorities is expected in the near future.

If the Apparitions of Montichiari are approved, it would seem that they may well mark one of the most important milestones in the ever-increasing series of warning messages granted by the merciful Mother of God to a sinful generation that has perhaps doomed itself to a third World War. Rounding out the cycle which began at Fatima, the message of Our Lady of Montichiari brings to suffering humanity an inspiring promise of future peace and mercy—"when the good as well as the wicked are united in prayer" to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in one world-wide Hour of Grace. In only "a short while"—as a result of "prayers and penances," especially "for the conversion of Russia"—mankind "will obtain mercy and peace from the Immaculate Heart of the Mystical Rose."

Christmas

IN LEGEND and CUSTOM

Whistling during midnight Mass like the Abruzzi Italians, trumpeting ancient carols from the church towers, or singing them in the streets, placing lighted candles in the window on Christmas Eve . . . what else are these customs, but the efforts of a childlike people to dramatize what they believe?

by William W. Buechel

IN the Church's calendar the feasts of Easter and Pentecost, as well as the Epiphany and Corpus Christi rank above the feast of Christmas in importance. Yet, the childlike hearts of the Church's spiritual children are so captured by the beauty and intimacy of Christmas, the birthday of the King, that innumerable customs and legends have sprung up through the centuries around this feast.

Unfortunately, most of the customs have died out, even in the countries of their origin. In some instances this may have been caused by a failure of the original spontaneity in expressing the true spirit of the occasion. Generally, however, the passing of such Christian customs seems to be caused by the grim, ruthless advance of the modern spirit of cold indifference and contempt for anything savoring of a childlike heart. The foolish world, it seems, cannot or will not distinguish rightly between childlikeness and childishness. Many of these customs, both ancient and modern, testify to the simple, direct faith of Christian peoples. They were spontaneous expressions of a conviction that "the goodness and kindness (the Latin equivalent is "humanity") of God our Savior hath appeared."

An old European custom once again finding favorable acceptance is the Advent Wreath. A durable hoop covered with evergreen and supporting four candles was suspended before the hearth or over the common table. Hung on the eve of the

First Sunday of Advent by the father, it was blessed with Holy Water, and the prayer for the Mass of the First Sunday was recited, to which all responded. During that first week of Advent one candle would be lighted for the family meals and prayers; during the second week two candles would burn during all family exercises. The steadily increasing flames are eloquent symbols of the "Splendor of Eternal Light and the Sun of Justice who comes to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

In some cities of South America there exists even today a pretty Christmas morning custom. At one of the early Masses an Indian lullaby is softly sung to the accompaniment of tiny bells and rattles and a kind of bubbling music made by blowing into water with a straw. The lullabies are supposed to hush the Baby Jesus to sleep, and the rattles to amuse Him.

A delightful Christmas legend and practice which one finds among the Walloons in Belgium centers around St. Hubert's bread. In keeping with this custom many housewives open a window of their home on Christmas Eve. In this window they will place a loaf of bread they themselves have baked, leaving it there until after midnight. The legend has it that at the holy moment which marks the dawn of a new Christmas Day the bread placed in the window is especially blessed.

It is the custom of the Abruzzi Italians to



whistle softly during the entire Christmas Midnight Mass. At the Elevation of this Mass the whistling assumes its loudest volume. Whistling seems a strange sort of music for a Midnight Mass, but it is done in commemoration of the shepherds who came to see the Infant and who were wont to whistle with peculiar shepherd pipes. In some of these villages the whistling is done through reeds dipped in a vessel of water, placed especially in the church for that purpose.

Commemoration of the star of Bethlehem is the object of a picturesque Christmas custom that takes place in Holland. Young men, carrying a lighted star symbolizing the heavenly guide of the Holy Magi, go from house to house. From the throng of people who follow them the young men collect alms, as well as from each house they visit. All of these funds are then turned over to the proper town official for distribution among the poor of that district.

Although the practice of setting up and venerating the Christmas crib was made popular by St. Francis of Assisi, it was quite extensively known long before his time. The cathedral of Rouen possessed a crib of which it was very proud, and to which reference was made by many renowned preachers whose sermons are still extant. Some years ago, a collection of cribs of all the Christian centuries was undertaken by Max Schmederer, a wealthy citizen of Munich, in Bavaria. The collection was given by him to the National Museum in his native city. Just what has happened to it since the great debacle of the Second World War we have been unable to ascertain.

In the last century even, adults as well as children would congregate about the crib containing the life-size figure of the Infant Jesus, and while some of the group would rock the image, others would sing songs fitted for the occasion. Some of these songs are to be found in an ecclesiastical hymnal published by the Jesuit Fathers at Cologne as late as the middle of the eighteenth century.

Nature itself was supposed to be abounding in the Christmas spirit. Certain trees and bushes blossomed miraculously at Christmastide. That strangely beautiful flower, the Christmas Rose, does in reality spread its pure white petals, slightly tinged with delicate green, above the winter's snow at this time of year.

In Rome and some other Italian cities, shepherds still come to town on Christmas Day, and meander through the streets stopping before the Christmas

shrines, so common in the Catholic cities of Europe, to play their ancient lays. In many towns of Bohemia, the night watchman announced the twelfth hour by blowing his horn, the herdsmen following him playing Christmas songs on long flutes made of birch bark, to the accompaniment of bag-pipes and bird-voices. In Germany the municipal buglers and trumpeters, together with the church choir, ascended the church tower, from which the melodies of the well-known ancient carols were carried by the wind over the town.

One of the loveliest Christmas legends heard in the south of France concerns the blossom of the French honeysuckle. According to the legend, the French honeysuckle blossom got its exquisite rose color when our Blessed Mother laid the tiny Infant Jesus in the manger at Bethlehem. This little plant was growing in Bethlehem at the time, the legend says, and as soon as the little Jesus rested on it, the tiny flowers flushed with happiness, recognizing the Infant as the Creator of the world. Happiness and success are believed in the south of France to attend the finder of a French honeysuckle blossom.

Our own practice of exchanging gifts at Christmas with our friends originally had a deep religious significance. We all know the beautiful story of the coming of the Wise Men from out of the East. These Magi brought the Infant precious gifts. From this visit originated in some unrecorded way our own practice of gift-giving. Many churches have a box or basket at the Crib for donations to the Christ Child, which are generally given in the same spirit with which the three Holy Magi conferred their gifts.

One of the customs of many churches in the Philippine Islands is that when the priest leaves the sacristy and ascends the flight of stairs leading to the high altar for the celebration of the Christmas Mass, a waxen angel, high over the heads of the people, starts moving from the rear of the church towards the sanctuary. Slowly the heavenly visitant approaches, moving along a line of rattan which has been fastened under the ceiling or roof, so as to be directly over the altar when the priest sings the *Gloria*. No sooner does the celebrant intone this hymn than the angel showers a mass of flowers which covers priest, altar and steps, while the church bells are rung loudly and long. Then at the Elevation, a band plays the *Marche Real*. In Spain this is played on only three occasions: for the ruler, for the reception of Bishops, and at the Elevation during Mass.

In Denmark, the holly is called "Christ-thorn." The old legend has it that when the shepherds went to the midnight cave on the first Christmas night, a wee lamb that followed one of the shepherds was





caught by the holly thorn, and the red berries are the blood drops that froze on the branches.

A Christmas gift to us from Ireland is that beautiful custom of placing a lighted candle in the window on Christmas Eve. Of course this must be the first light in the house that Holy Eve, and it must not be blown out for it typifies the light of Faith. The Irish tradition has it that it must burn out if you would have luck the coming year.

The Yule log, associated with the Christmas season in England, probably had its origin in the simple necessity of providing warmth in the cold season, and it was not till 1557 that the lighting of the Yule log became a public ceremony in England. In England a tenant had the right to feed at his lord's expense as long as a round of wood, given by him, would burn.

Another early custom in England was the exposing of grain on Christmas night to gain fertility from the falling dew.

Throughout northern Germany tables are spread and lights are left burning during the entire night before Christmas so that the Blessed Mother and her Child with their attendant angel escort, who pass while all are asleep, may find something to eat.

In some parts of Austria folk place candles in the windows in order that the Christ Child may not stumble as He passes on His way through the village. In the Tyrol it is a general custom after the Christmas Eve supper, and before going to Midnight Mass, to leave a great bowl full of fresh milk on the table with spoons set around.

On Christmas morning the blessing of boats takes place in several fishing villages and seaports of Greece. No seaman who happens to be ashore on this holy day will venture again to sea until this ceremony has been accomplished. The priest goes to the end of the pier, carrying a wooden cross with a stone tied to it, and throws it into the water. Instantly all the men and boys present jump into the sea searching for the sacred emblem. In the meantime the cap is passed around on the shore for the benefit of the one who finds the cross. Both the wooden cross and the alms he hands to the priest to be given to the poor.

There is the old belief that at midnight of Christmas Eve the bees awaken from their winter sleep to hum songs of gladness in honor of the Lord's coming. According to the legend they may still be heard by the pure of heart.

In some places, particularly northern France, it is the custom to place shoes instead of stockings before the fireplace on Christmas Eve. This prac-

tice, it is said, derives from the legend that long, long ago a penniless child, desiring to give some gift to the Christ Child, parted with his wooden shoes, placing them beside the manger which his parents had set up. The next morning the shoes were still there beside the figure of the Infant, but they were filled with golden coins.

There was a merry old time in old New York when Christmas rolled around. The Dutch were a joyful people, and the streets rang with gladness to commemorate the birthday of Christ. In 1654, for instance, the City Fathers declared a Christmas holiday that began on December 14th and lasted till three weeks past New Year's Day. That was a Christmas holiday that our own school children must envy.

A beautiful Christmas custom has long been kept in Spain. It is called the Hostelry Procession. It re-enacts the wanderings of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph seeking shelter on the first Christmas Eve. A group of children carrying statues of Mary and Joseph moves from house to house seeking admission. Their request is always refused. Finally the church is reached and the request made again. A voice asks who it is that seeks shelter. One of the children replies: "It is I, Mary, Queen of Heaven, who seek a place whereon to lay my head this night." Immediately the church doors are swung wide open and the children proceed to the Crib, depositing the statues in the Crib, along with a life-size image of the Baby Jesus.

After Midnight Mass, Pueblo Indians in southwestern America will dance until dawn as a welcome to their beloved Santo Nino, the Infant Babe.

The writer can find no better way to end this article than by using the words a Blackfoot Indian would use in wishing you a Merry Christmas:

"Well, today is the day we embrace. I wish you good health, a long and holy life, and that you may arrive at the abode of our Eternal Father."



CHRISTMAS JOY

Our Savior is born today, let us rejoice! For it is not right that place be given to sadness when it is the birthday of Life, which, having taken away the fear of death, fills us with joy by reason of the eternal life which it promises. No one is shut out from a share in this happiness. All have one common cause of joy, for, as our Lord, the destroyer of sin and death, finds no one free from guilt, so He comes to liberate everyone.

— St. Leo the Great — Matins, Christmas Night

AUSTRIA HOLDS FAST

ELECTION DAY ROLLED AROUND, AND THE KREMLIN WAS ALL SET TO TELL THE WORLD THAT RED "DEMOCRACY" HAD WON ANOTHER SWEEPING VICTORY, BUT WHAT A JOLT THE COMMUNISTS GOT WHEN THE AUSTRIAN BALLOTS WERE COUNTED.

AUSTRIA has proved definitely that she has not been deceived by the cozening promises of Red propaganda. For the second time she has set the Kremlin down with a thud in her post-war national elections. Unfortunately for its own prestige, the Kremlin selected Austria's first post-war national election as the occasion to prove to the world at large that the Reds could win elections when conducted in a free manner or, in other words, in the absence of Red bayonets and Tommy-guns. Prior to Austria's first election, the Kremlin had been smarting under the charges, fully proved, that the several elections held in the countries, now satellites, were won by the Reds through compelling threats of either outright murder, or else a slower, more torturing death in concentration camps, for those who did not vote the Red ticket.

Immediately prior to Austria's first national election, the Kremlin high command felt sure it had succeeded in thoroughly honey-combing Austria with Red propaganda of such alluring sort that it could not fail to win the support of the Austrian voters. It felt quite smug in its self assurance that its propaganda had thoroughly succeeded in convincing the Austrian man in the street that the several elections held in satellite nations had been entirely free and democratic and that any charges to the contrary had been nothing more than the nefarious schemes of "dirty, bloated capitalists". Perhaps the Kremlin's smug-

ness was largely due to the fact that the Austrian people were wise enough not to show any obvious disbelief when Red propaganda was presented to them for consumption. Red propaganda agencies, faithfully delivering their poison in every nook and cranny of its intended victim, unwisely believed that Austrian silence gave consent to the veracity of their statements.

Election day rolled around and the Kremlin was all set to announce jubilantly to the world that Communism's "democracy" had won another overwhelming victory. The election was in the Red bag! Nothing could be more certain! Imagine the consternation which jolted the spines of everyone from Walrus Joe Stalin on down to the tiniest Red bureaucrat in the Kremlin when the Austrian ballots were counted. Red candidates had won only four seats out of 165 in the Austrian General Assembly. Communism in Austria had been given a terrific drubbing by a champion of justice and morality which had entered the lists unheralded and unsung. It was the Austrian version of the Christian Democrats, known locally as the People's Party and headed by Leopold Figl. Working quietly in its door to door campaign, it had convincingly shown the Austrian voter, not only the deliberate and malicious lies upon which Red propaganda was based, but also the devastating errors upon which Marxian philosophy is built. By sheer logic and historical fact the People's Party campaigners revealed to the Austrian

by H. C. McGinnis

public that today's atheistic Communism is the greatest satanic movement of all history, exceeding even the destructive wickedness produced by the birth of Liberalism.

Austria's People's Party is consistently achieving a two-pronged success. First, it is unmasking the Communist program which is proving so utterly destructive of human rights in the satellite countries. Secondly, it is constructively educating the people in the structural and operational patterns of the moral and natural type of society, which is the very backbone of the Christian concept of democracy. In achieving the first of the foregoing objectives, Leopold Figl and his fellow workers are taking full advantage of, and are cashing in on, Austria's geographical position as related to Communism's satellite victims. Austria lies immediately in front of the Iron Curtain. While Red censorship is admittedly extremely severe, it can not possibly prevent the truth of what goes on behind it from seeping out in convincing amounts. The truth of the happenings in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, for example, is being brought to the attention of Austria's people by every means at the command of psychological propaganda. Posters on the order of the reproduction which accompanies this article are widespread, constantly calling to the Austrian mind the fact that the terrible persecution and degradation of Cardinal Mindszenty and other members of the Catholic clergy and of the laity could easily claim Austrian victims also, should Communism be accorded in Austria the acceptance it was accorded in the earlier days of its ideological invasion of Hungary.

Through a never-ending series of posters and tracts the Austrian rank and file is being educated to realize that, while Communism often sounds alluring to those who have not yet come into direct contact with it, it is definitely a degrading, loathsome thing to those who have had the extreme misfortune to become better acquainted with it and its operation.

For it is as true as there is a sun that Communism's practices, once revealed in their true light, lose the glamor which they once held to victims while they were only intended victims of the Kremlin. Fortunately, the Austrian people are in position to realize that the revelations concerning Communism's actual practices are not the false claims of those who for some reason or another do not want to see Communism accepted. The tales which daily filter from behind the Iron Curtain in tiny rivulets and fragmentary bits are soon pieced together by the Austrians, like the segments of a jig-saw puzzle, to make a picture which is so utterly revolting that the Austrian voter wants no part of the Kremlin's "beneficent democracy".

In the second aspect of its twofold achievement, Austria's People's Party is accomplishing a two-fold gain. First, it is educating the people in the Christian pattern of social relations in all their fields of activity. It is demonstrating the economic justice possible under the principles enunciated by *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. Equally important, it is achieving widespread education in that pattern of political society which stems from the natural law, as opposed to the erroneous contractual forms advocated by both Liberalism and Collectivism. As the natural, moral and democratic pattern of the civil order which it advocates finds its place in the Austrian heart to an ever-increasing extent, the pseudo-democracy of Liberalism which made possible totalitarianism, and hence Communism, is displaced. The abandonment of Liberalism and its patterns is nearly as important as the rejection of Communism; for so long as Liberalism and its Individualism remain the prevailing mode, as it has for the past four centuries, some form of totalitarianism will always appeal to millions as a possible remedy. Liberalism's destructive philosophy of Individualism and Deism has all but destroyed in Western civilization society's organic nature, the pattern which prevailed in Western civilization during the Middle Ages. Liberalism denies ut-

terly the pattern for society and all human relations which is to be found in the doctrine of the Mystical Body, substituting instead a social pattern which, in its extreme individualism, resembles little more than a heap of stones. In a heap of stones no individual stone has any relationship to the stones about it, the existence of any individual stone not depending to any degree whatever upon the stones which surround it.

Seen in its true light, the successful campaign of Austria's People's Party in its promotion of the true justice and democracy which find their birth in society's natural order stands as a spear aimed directly at the heart of Communist ambitions to enslave first all of Europe, and then the remainder of world society. Austria's clarity of vision where things Communist are concerned must be both an eye-opener and then an inspiration to those miserable peoples who were either forced or deluded into becoming Moscow's satellites. Despite the Kremlin's bombastic utterances concerning the cyclonic and widespread acceptance of its doctrines, the thorough trouncing administered by the Austrians for the second time must surely prove to thinking people the world over that Communism reaches an authoritative stop-light when it is thoughtfully opposed by the justice of the Christian social order.

It is plain that Austrians are not suffering the indignities which are being perpetrated upon the inhabitants of satellite nations. They are secure in the practice of their political rights and are rapidly erecting a pattern of economic justice which accords with Christian social teachings. In Austria the establishment of a just and economic order is not as difficult as in many other places, for the Austrian nation is now reaping the benefits of the teachings promulgated by its many Christian Workingmen's Associations which were formed during the last decade of the nineteenth century for the purpose of bringing to fruition the teachings of *Rerum Novarum*.

Austria's Catholics, who comprise the overwhelming majority of the nation, are not forced to stand helplessly by while pressure is being brutally exerted to make their Church become little more than another department of the civil government, as is being done in Czechoslovakia and Hungary in particular. They are not faced with the possibility that their clergy will become civil employees and thus, through a never ending series of government directives, gradually are shorn of their ability to perform their duties to religion and morality.

Actually, Austria is a chief leader in demonstrating to a despairing



Poster used in the Austrian anti-communist campaign. "TODAY MINDSZENTHY—TOMORROW YOU? The guarantor for the personal freedom of the individual remains the Austrian Peoples Party."

world that Christian social principles are the only true antidote to the vicious evils of Liberalism on one hand and Statism on the other. The several parties in western Europe which represent, in whole or in part, the Christian social program have proven themselves beyond all shadow of doubt to be the one sure bulwark against the Kremlin's steady pressure to enslave all of Europe. Unfortunately, however, their achievement and the principles for which they stand are all too little publicized on this side of the ocean. Millions of Americans are still led to believe that the only choice possible in today's world is

either that pseudo-democracy called Liberalism or else some degree of Statism. The third choice, the pattern which represents the Christian order of society and which is gaining strength rapidly in many parts of Europe, is little known to America's millions. It appears that the majority of the editors of our daily press are far more interested in reporting the success of British and American trade negotiations with the Communist Tito, and British gains in securing the friendship of Chinese Communists, than they are in reporting the outstanding achievements of those national organizations in Europe which represent

Christianity in action as the atheistic hordes of Red Russia roll forward toward enslaving the world.

The second severe trouncing since the war's end administered by Austria's Christians to the Red subversives, who sought to bring their nation under atheism's domination, received rather scant notice in the secular press of a nation which is daily under attack by the same foe. It is high time that, regardless of prejudices, we begin to hew to the line in our reporting of world news and let the chips, and the credit also, fall where they may. After all, there is a true concept of democracy; and it is not the product of Rousseau!

THE CHRISTMAS TREE—continued from page 363

He opened his eyes. There was Angelo—but not Angelo—staring solemnly down at him. Closer, bent over him, was a beautiful young woman. She wore a faded gray cloth coat, but her cluster of bright curls was like a halo, and her eyes, blue as the Neapolitan sea, lightened at Pietro's feeble question.

"Thank God!" she said softly.

An hour later, Pietro found himself comfortably ensconced next to a blazing hearth, while the family of the Andersons went about their Christmas Eve preparations, in the high-ceilinged living room of their old frame house. Patches of peeling wallpaper were conveniently concealed by pine branches, and the hilly terrain of the ancient floor made a perfect rocker for the baby Antony's bassinet, tugged vigorously by Tommy and Tommy's small yellow-pig-tailed sister Dorothy. Their daddy, a broad-shouldered, amiable young man, hammered lustily at the tree-stand, while the beautiful lady, her curls disheveled and her pretty face flushed with excitement, kept darting in from the spicy kitchen to watch the progress on the tree.

"Angelo—" Pietro looked at Tommy and blinked his tired old eyes. No, it was not Angelo. Well, he must be getting along, not butting in on other folks' Christmas. The doctor said he was okay.

"We usually go to the midnight Mass," Mr. Anderson said regretfully, "but this time we couldn't find anyone to stay with the children."

"I—I will stay with the bambino, if you wish it," Pietro said. The words came out, aloud, to his astonishment. He would never have dared to say them!

"Oh, would you?" The beautiful lady brushed back her curls and was smiling warmly, tenderly,

at old Pietro. "It would be a wonderful help, if you are sure you are feeling all right now. And you could sleep here with us tonight, and help us celebrate in the morning!"

"I shall be very happy, signora," Pietro said.

And then, quickly, he turned his face away. For it was the first time he had had a family since Angelo died. It was the first time his thought of someone else had been repaid with kindness, and a bitterness he had been unaware of slid from his heart, leaving it as light as a little child's, on Christmas Eve.

On Christmas Eve... it was as though the Christmas Mass was being sung, majestically, that night in the Anderson household, as Pietro sleepily sat by the fire and watched. And the next morning, when Tommy excitedly ripped the paper from a red streamliner, Pietro's happiness was complete.

"How does it work? Show me how it works!" Tommy shouted.

"Why, see here—it has the wind-up! This one more turn now will make it shoot faster!" explained that veteran calaboose driver Pietro Bordone, giving the key an energetic twist.

Tears of joy and excitement spilled out of Tommy's brown eyes. "When I grow up, guess what I'm going to be?" he declared.

"An engineer," Mr. Bordone said. Yes, please God, an engineer!

The wind, coming up the long street, rattled the blinds and whirled a few flakes at the panes, then retreated. The fire on the hearth blazed higher.

"God bless you," said Pietro Bordone, to the beautiful lady, the young father, the children, and Tommy, so like his own little Angelo. "God bless you and keep you."

"Thank you, Mr. Bordone," the lady said softly.

Echoes from our Abbey Halls

The biggest news since the last appearance of the *Echoes* is the decision of the Abbey Chapter Tuesday afternoon October 25 to found a new Mission Monastery. The vote was overwhelmingly in the majority for the new foundation. The new monastery will begin as a priory dependent on the Abbey of St. Meinrad. Its location in the Dakotas has not yet been determined. The next step is to select the personnel. This is being done by means of a private

questionnaire given to each member of St. Meinrad's Abbey, Fathers, Brothers, and Clerics. Four representatives of the Indian Missions, Fathers Ildephonse, Hildebrand, Augustine and Gualbert were present for the Chapter.

N.C.M.E.A. Convention

There were a lot of visitors at the Abbey Saturday October 29th. Oct. 28th and 29th the Indiana section of the National Catholic Music Educa-

tors Association met at the Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand and at St. Meinrad. There were sessions consisting of lectures, clinics, chant practices. As part of the Association's education in liturgy and chant there was a Pontifical High Mass Saturday morning, October 29th at 9:45. Archbishop Schulte of Indianapolis was the celebrant. The evening of October 28th a 100 voice choir trained by Father Theophane, O.S.B. gave a concert at Ferdinand. The afternoon of October 29th members of the Association witnessed a Pontifical Vesper Service in the Abbey Church at which Father Abbot Ignatius, O.S.B. was celebrant.

Band Day

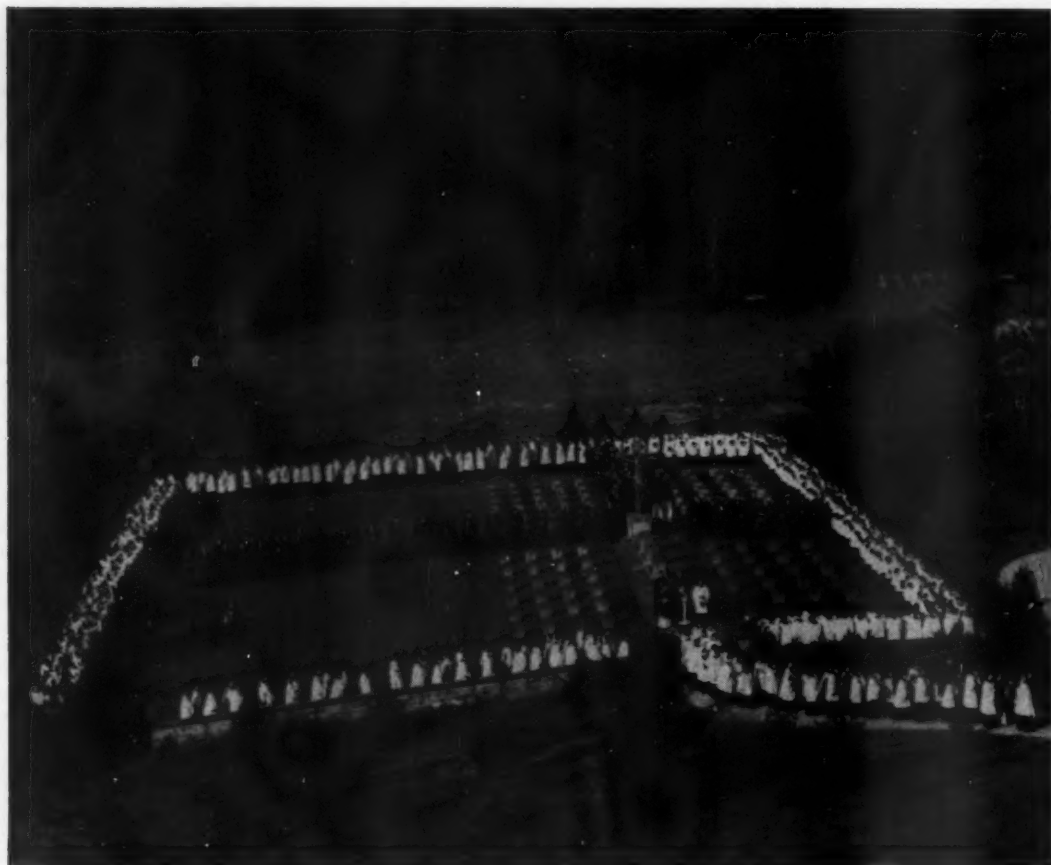
In case our readers are wondering about the success of Band Day last October 9th we can say that it was the best and biggest Band Day ever held at St. Meinrad. The weather was perfect; the trees appeared in their best autumnal colors; the band raced the pulses of our thousands of visitors. About 2,500 dinners were served to our guests.

Artist Arrives

October 15th Mr. Herbert Jogerst of Renshaw, Germany arrived at St. Meinrad to make his temporary home here. Mr. Jogerst who is 35 years old has lived what one might call a full life. His career has certainly been varied. Born and reared in Germany, he became interested as a young man in becoming a sculptor in stone and wood. He was also a professor at Strassbourg. After serving in the German army throughout the war, and spending some time at Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky as a prisoner of war, he returned to Germany. Unable to make a decent living at his craft, he requested to come to St. Meinrad where he has been well received. His first assignment as a creative artist is to carve a statue of St. Bede, the



Delegates to the convention of the National Catholic Music Educators Association attending Pontifical Mass in the Abbey church.



All Souls' Day services in the Abbey cemetery.

great Benedictine Scholar, to be placed in the niche on the west side of the new science building.

Alumni Meeting

October 12 Lafayette, Indiana was host to the St. Meinrad Alumni Association. The new officers elected for the coming year are priests from the Fort Wayne Diocese—Rev. Stanley Manoski, president; Rev. William Faber, Vice-President; the Rev. Timothy Doody, Secretary; and the Rev. Philip Fusco, Treasurer. Father Abbot Ignatius delivered the sermon at the Pontifical Mass celebrated by Bishop Bennet in St. Mary's Cathedral, Lafayette on Thursday, October 13th. The next meeting will be held in Fort Wayne, Indiana, but the date has not been set.

Assignments

Father Eberhard, O.S.B. and Father James, O.S.B., are conducting courses in adult Christian education at Holy Trinity Church in Evansville, Indiana. Father James is lecturing on the Sacrament of Penance; Father Eberhard is giving a short course in Appreciating The Psalms.

Father Paul, O.S.B., has left our midst again. He returned to North Dakota with Father Ildephonse to stay at St. Michael's Mission. Father Paul has not been very well lately; it is hoped that the change in climate will benefit him.

Word comes from Father Cornelius Waldo, O.S.B., pastor of St. Charles Church, Palm Springs, California, that his little parish has grown so fast that he had to have

an assistant priest. The Rev. Robert Donovan, O.S.B. has been loaned by his religious superiors to act as Father Cornelius Waldo's new assistant.

Miscellaneous

One of our faithful employees, Mr. Joseph Seng, affectionately called 'Uncle Joe' by the students, died at St. Mary's Hospital, Evansville, Ind., October 25th, as the result of injuries received on October 8th. May he rest in peace.

Brother Benedict Joseph (Ben Joe) who was hustled to St. Joseph's Infirmary, Louisville, Ky. Oct. 3rd., returned to the Abbey Oct. 15th. Brother suffered a heart attack, and is at present in a very weak condition. Our Oblate Jerome Fagan, who has been absent on sick

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leave at Indianapolis returned to the Abbey much improved. Oblate Joseph, O.S.B., who underwent an operation in Louisville, Ky. late in September, returned to the Abbey October 19th. Father Norbert, O.S.B., who went to the Mayo Clinic early in September underwent a serious stomach operation Oct. 22. Our Father Daniel Madlon, O.S.B., underwent an emergency operation for appendicitis at St. Vincent's Hospital, Sioux City, Ia. in mid October. Latest reports from the patient himself indicate that he is recuperating rapidly. Fr. Daniel is stationed at St. Augustine's Indian Mission at Winebago, Nebraska. Brothers Odilo, the ninety-two year wonder, is not so spry anymore since his illness. He finds it very hard to get around. Brother George also is a very sick man, but manages somehow to get about the building. Our Brother Philip is not too well either, but it does not interfere with his praying always, according to the Gospel Counsel; his prayers ascend orally to God all hours of the night and day—sometimes in a low voice and quite often in song, and his rosary is always grasped in his fingers like a life-line. Brother Philip hopes to celebrate his seventy-fifth anniversary of religious profession on Christmas Eve this year. Brother made his profession Dec. 24, 1874 when Abbot Martin Marty, O.S.B.,—the first abbot of St. Meinrad, was superior. Brother Philip is our only link with the pioneers of those days. We hope he remains with us for many years despite his constant petition to be taken home to heaven. We need his example.

On December 3rd five of our Brothers will celebrate their twenty-fifth anniversary of religious profession. Brother Vitalis, missionary at St. Michael's Mission, North Dakota, will join with Brother Felix, also a missionary at St. Michael's in their celebration Dec. 3rd. Brothers Wolfgang, Franz and Kilian will have their celebration here at the Abbey. Brother Vitalis acts as mission carpenter at St. Michael's and Brother Felix as mechanic. At home in the Abbey Brother Wolfgang assists Brother Benno in the kitchen; Brother Franz

is our faithful shoemaker, and Brother Kilian manages our Abbey slaughterhouse. To all these happy jubilarians we offer our heartfelt congratulations.

The Sixth Class in the Minor Seminary made theatrical history by presenting one of the finest 'First Nighters' ever staged by the students. The name and spirit of the play fitted in with Haloween, "What

a Night". The play was directed by Father Christopher, O.S.B.

Next month the versatile and cheerful namesake of jolly Saint Nicholas, Father Nicholas Schmitt, O.S.B., our Abbey house warden and vestryman will write the Abbey news for our readers. His success in writing the mimeographed letter *Family Tidings* bespeaks for our readers a very enjoyable column.

ANNOUNCING



THE MAN ON FIRE

The Story of Saint Paul

by MARY FABYAN WINDEATT

Price \$2.50

NOW AVAILABLE





TRUTHS MEN LIVE BY, by John A. O'Brien, Ph.D., LL.D. The MacMillan Company, New York. \$3.50.

Although the Reverend Doctor John O'Brien is the Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame, yet he does not write in such a way that his readers must wallow in the few bits of matter left from the labors of a great intellect. Clearly, forcefully, in simple language, he sets forth in this book five major points: God; Religion, Man's Bond With God; The Soul, God's Image in Man; The Bible and Science; and Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Christian Religion. When he has finished covering this matter, everyone must inevitably understand precisely what has been claimed and what has been proved.

Not all of those who will read the book, of course, will have the gift of Faith; as a result, not all will accept what Doctor O'Brien sets out to prove. Yet whether or not this or that person accepts the facts, he cannot deny that he understands what they mean. Doctor O'Brien leaves no room for doubt. He is a college professor, and has been so for nearly eighteen years—as a result he understands well how hard it is to grasp some points. He knows that no matter how clear an explanation one may give, there can always be found some few who must have it explained again. It is precisely so that even these may be satisfied that the book is written.

In praise of the book, many points can be illustrated. The primary and most striking in this reviewer's opinion was the use of innumerable

(and superbly apt) examples. Not one page in the book can be found which does not contain at least one, usually several examples. And since it is indisputably true that examples can clarify a point better than a hundred arguments, the result is that every statement is exceptionally clear. (It might be noted that a great number of the examples are taken from class-room dialogue between Doctor O'Brien and his Notre Dame Halfbacks—none of whom seem to have the traditional football player's intellectual lack of prowess.)

The second point of commendation is one which must flow from the first. The language is that of you and me and the man next door. There is none of the technical phraseology which often mars the works of even such otherwise superior apologists as Monsignor Sheen and other clerical masters. Absolute simplicity and clarity—yet never any talking down to the reader; perfect understanding of the average mind, yet never an insult to the more polished intellect—this is the by-word of Doctor O'Brien's style.

Many are already familiar with one or the other of Doctor O'Brien's earlier books, especially with *THE FAITH OF MILLIONS*; these will realize that we are not overstating the case when we say that the book is an absolute necessity for anyone who claims to be interested in truth. There can be no excuse for not purchasing it, particularly if one makes a habit of buying any books at all. But even for those who never buy books, feeling that any reading material can be brought home from the

local library, we say, "Change your mind and buy Doctor O'Brien's book. It is undoubtedly and absolutely the best thing yet written in its line for the average lay audience, or for the above average lay audience, or for any other lay audience. It is also indispensable for the clergy who may come into contact with thinking unbelievers."

THE OLD WIVES' TALE, by Arnold Bennett, illustrated by John Austen. The Heritage Press, 595 Madison Avenue, New York 22, New York. \$5.00.

Until this Heritage edition of *The Old Wives' Tale* reached us, it had never been our privilege to read Arnold Bennett's great novel. The primary reason for this negligence is that every edition we had seen (and there have been many editions since the original publication in 1908) was in the usual format of early 20th century novels: tremendous tomes, composed mainly of a very dark yellow paper, on which the print was so small as to be practically invisible. At long last we have found the edition that made reading the book possible.

The book itself needs little review, even for those who have not yet read it. Arnold Bennett's terrific power of characterization is familiar, at least by hearsay, to almost all who read. His accurate touch in portraying life, the vivid realism of his conversation, his knack for comparisons which are not soon forgotten—all these have been discussed at great length by many different men. In a review of the book, we need only recall them to mind before proceeding to the

main question, the value of an edition such as this.

As with *The Ring And The Book*, mentioned in the October *READING ROOM*, we would have no reason to bring the book up in these columns were it not for the beautiful piece of work The Heritage Press has given to us. The illustrations by John Austen are unusual in their simplicity. As the novel is not a story of violent action or tremendous events, so the illustrations are neither violent nor sweeping, neither overwhelming nor tremendous. They are simple, calm, portraying the characters exactly as the reader imagines them. All are excellent, and all serve to make this an excellent edition, particularly suited for a Christmas gift to a lover of beautiful books.

THE UN-MARXIAN SOCIALIST:

A Study of Proudhon, by Henri de Lubac. Sheed & Ward, 830 Broadway, New York 3, New York. \$3.50.

Pierre Joseph Proudhon was called by Dostoevski one of the greatest minds of his time. He was called by Ernest Renan, "an absurd person" and "a poor fool". He is called by the Publisher of the book, "the one revolutionary writer who has depth, who sees the mystery of reality." Surely an amazing thing for an atheist to be praised by Russia's greatest religious novelist, to be condemned by another apostate Catholic, and to be commended by a Catholic publishing house. Yet one who reads Père de Lubac's excellent volume, as translated by R. E. Scantlebury, will not hesitate to agree thoroughly with Dostoevski and the composer of the publisher's blurb, and will realize why Renan was forced to be so antagonistic toward his fellow anti-Religionist.

What Père de Lubac does in *THE UN-MARXIAN SOCIALIST* is this: he endeavors to present an objective study of the mind and thought of one who opposed in practice the Catholic Church and her actions, yet defended her in theory by advocating all those things which she always advocated. He explains satisfactorily why Proudhon fell from the Church, why he was able to preach destruction for the Church

though he loved it as the forerunner of the Revolution—about which he thoroughly disagreed with Karl Marx.

The Book is written in a comparatively readable style, seldom descending to the banal in presenting such a mind, and seldom rising to the purely abstract or technical. Generously seasoned with the words of Proudhon and his contemporaries, it shows itself accurate and reliable. And insofar as one can sympathize with or understand the minds of the Proudhons of this world, the author makes us sympathize with and understand Pierre Joseph Proudhon.

Is the book then without flaw? Hardly. But the flaws that do appear (and they are few) are not too grave. One is that the book reads rather jerkily, primarily because the author never thought a page was complete until it contained six footnotes, each of which could occupy the readers attention for one

Reviews by J. M. Miller

minute or more. This ruins the pleasure of reading, for one stops at every tenth or twelfth word it seems, in order to find the reference at the bottom of the page. Surely the matter herein contained could have been worked directly into the text at times to obviate some percentage of the unnecessary distractions.

Again it often seems that the author bends over backwards in trying to give Proudhon the benefit of the doubt—if there be any such—as regards his dealings with the Church. Perhaps we are mistaken in this, but it does in fact seem that in an effort to prove Proudhon both sincere and great—both of which we admit him to have been—the author often implies that he was justified in his more violent language and actions. Yet this may be a false impression on our part.

For those interested in "the great moralist of the working-classes", Père de Lubac has presented his picture well; for those unfamiliar with him, the book will serve as an excellent introduction. For all interested in the beginnings of the "Revolution" of Marx, the book will be valuable.

UNDER THE SUN OF SATAN, by Georges Bernanos, translated by Harry L. Binsse. Pantheon Books, 333 Sixth Avenue, New York 14, New York. \$3.00.

When the first English translation of Bernanos' powerful study of sanctity appeared in 1940, it was met by almost unanimous acclaim from all who read it. In nine years it has lost none of its power, depth, or intensity. If the author was acclaimed as another Dostoevski once, the comparison still stands unchanged. The publication established Bernanos fame, and was considered by many as the most important work by a contemporary French writer until that time. This too, seems the same. It is still as forceful and awe-inspiring as when it first appeared bearing the title, **THE STAR OF SATAN**.

According to the translator, his version of the title is actually no more accurate than the original English title, both coming close but not completely succeeding in giving the idea of the French which seems to mean more properly, *In Satan's Kingdom*, or *In The Clime of Satan*. This however is unimportant in the consideration of the book.

The novel consists of a prologue and two parts. The prologue tells the story of a completely depraved young peasant girl, typifying the world of wickedness and evil, the "land under the sun of Satan" in which the hero of the two parts is to work. This protagonist of the entire book is Abbe Donissan, a young and saintly priest striving to attain absolute holiness. The novel follows his struggle from the time of Ordination until death, and attributes to him the qualities of the Cure d'Ars, of whom he is the slightly altered but plainly recognizable double. The effect of the central character on those with whom he comes in contact, his first pastor (an apparently worldly, though actually rather holy priest), a French skeptic and agnostic (modelled after Anatole France), and the other persons inhabiting the book makes powerful and unforgettable reading.

It might be remarked that Mr. Binsse has given a very good translation for the most part. The

English in general reads smoothly and evenly, evidently preserving the rhythm and lilt of the original. In the narrative and descriptive sections, every sentence is a picture of life, calling scenes to the reader's mind automatically. Indeed, the translation is almost as much a work of art as the original itself must have been. In only one place is it weak, as a matter of fact: in some of the conversational sections, the dialogue is rather stilted. Actually of course, this must follow any effort to render French conversation into English, but it would seem that Mr. Binsse might have allowed himself more leeway in such cases, in order that the conversation would sound a little more like the actual talk of human beings.

In two hundred and fifty-three pages, the portrait of a Saint is presented by one of the great writers of our time. The presentation is so made as to be unforgettable, so perfectly are the characters etched out that all who read the book will come away with a more perfect understanding of human nature, and a more perfect sympathy for human weakness and strength.

Pantheon Books are to be congratulated by all who love truth and beauty as they set each other off

when well combined for presenting to the world the works of such men as Peguy, Bernanos, and Bloy.

WE DIE STANDING UP, by Dom Hubert Van Zeller, O.S.B. Sheed & Ward, 1949.

To write a book on general religious topics seems to invite an author to imitate the famous knight who jumped onto his steed and "rode off in every direction." The result is apt to be a potpourri of topics lacking balance and without sustained literary quality. One is puzzled to find a chapter on contemplation followed by one on the evils of coke drinking.

But Dom Van Zeller has neatly avoided this literary pitfall. His analysis is keen. It is plain, too, but it is garnished with piquant wit and a tart British outlook on life. In this slim book there are three chapters on friendship that put a stronger light to the matter than some whole books do. The author begins a delightful chapter on the emotions by saying: "When two doctors of the Church are found to disagree, it is a heaven-sent opportunity for an ordinary hack like myself to plunge in and express an opinion."

One might say that the book is characterized by its rehashing and thrashing of what are called the "principles" of modern society. Father Van Zeller is definitely allergic to modern sloganism, if we may use the word. His attitude is altogether delightfully pugilistic.

But Dom Van Zeller seems to wield a rather nervous hammer when he planks his final literary platform, in the last chapter of the book. After much talk of "first things first," "Christ means the Cross," etc., he at last writes: "We have accepted from infancy a whole crop of ideas which we have never shaken up for ourselves or held to the light of our own particular vision: *we have never examined them in the mind of Christ.*" This, to us, would appear to be the gist of the book.

Do read this new opus of Van Zeller. Most of us have to admit that our spiritual vitality has perhaps become pretty bloodless. What we need is a tonic. We need to be made to realize that our Catholic faith is not just a dry, distant thing. Father Van Zeller's book is a refreshing way to take the matter in hand.

—Hilary Ottensmeyer, O.S.B.

Real Life Sequel to MONSIEUR VINCENT

Ben O'Connor
in the LNB

I was hurrying along a street on the lower end of town toward the Church on 10th Street when a bum stepped out from a doorway and confronted me on the sidewalk. I seldom put anything in the collection box of the Church on 10th Street because it invariably costs me something in charity to get there. This time, it seemed, would be no exception. "I was hurt in the war..." he began, pointing to deep scars across his forehead and face. He was a particularly obnoxious type—the kind that talks right into your face and holds on tightly to your shoulder to make sure you don't run away. I consoled myself, remembering the words of Peter Maurin: "A bum is an ambassador of God." I have never had much use for those who avoid giving a hand out, saying, "Maybe he will spend it on beer."

But I wasn't too keen about this fellow, either. With all the noise he was making I couldn't concentrate on the coins in my pocket to identify them before exposing them to view. Finally I located a dime and pushed it into his palm. He looked at it a moment, then grunted and kicked me on the shins as he brushed by.

I fumed over this all the way to Church and thought a bit on the ingratitude of the world, how the good must suffer, and all that. Finally one of the closing lines of **MONSIEUR VINCENT** came to my mind, which the dying Saint spoke to one of his novices: Only by your love will the poor forgive you the bread that you give them.

I pushed a dime into his palm. He kicked my shins.

Finally it dawned on me what I had done. He should have spat in my face.



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MASS + YEAR



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THE MASS YEAR for 1950

Again this year we have the ORDO for Mass each day in English to be used with the Daily Roman or St. Andrew's Missals. The Meditations are on the Offertory Chants of the Sundays and some Feast Days.

30¢ a copy 4 copies \$1.00
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St. Paul the Apostle was a man on fire for God.

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| 6. My Name is Thomas | 13. The Man on Fire |
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ST. MEINRAD, INDIANA

3rd National Pilgrimage to Fatima also Rome and Lourdes

Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter of St. Louis is sponsoring the Third National Pilgrimage to Fatima for the anniversary of May 13, 1950.

His Excellency, Bishop Charles H. Helmsing, Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis, will lead this pilgrimage. Reverend Meinrad Hoffman, O. S. B. of St. Meinrad's Abbey will be spiritual director.

Travel arrangements will be taken care of by The International Catholic Travel Service of LANSEAIR.

Those who go by sea will leave April 28 and return to New York on June 6th. Tourist Class \$965.00. Cabin Class \$1095.00. First Class \$1380.00.

Those who go by air will leave New York on April 30th and return on June 1st. \$1265.00.

Besides FATIMA, pilgrims will visit shrines in France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy.

For more detailed information and for special Folder, write to:

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BROTHER MEINRAD HELPS

Dear Father:

Our mutual friend (H.W.W.) has asked me to report to you further regarding my condition, and in fairness to Brother Meinrad to whom I prayed, I am giving you the details.

In May 1942 our seventh son was born by Caesarean Section at the LaGrange, Ky. Memorial Hospital, after doctors had advised an abortion due to Fibroid Tumor. When I refused this in November the doctor had said, "I've heard that Catholics don't believe in this but this is my first experience with them being actually faced with the decision, but I can neither assure you of coming through and most certainly not the baby—even though you had nothing to do."

After I returned home I reported to you that the favor had been obtained through the intercession of Brother Meinrad and with your reply you mailed me a picture of him that had touched his bones.

I had been advised to submit to surgery immediately since the Tumor was according to the doctors and nurses present at the Caesarean "as large as a football." However, since my husband was on Government duty in Chicago for the following year, I hesitated going ahead with the operation with him absent.

In July 1943, I became pregnant again and knowing what a struggle I'd had previously, I immediately began saying the prayer on the card you had sent and told Brother Meinrad, "This time it's up to you." Knowing that if I sought medical care, the first recommendation would be an abortion, I did not go until the following January—and sure enough that was the doctor's first statement: "Had you come earlier, I would have insisted on an abortion." So I told him why I hadn't. He, too, remarked that it was a very slim chance etc., and sent me into the Chief Surgeon of Oak Park Hospital (Catholic) for a check-up.

The Chief Surgeon advised that there was nothing to do but wait and be prepared for another Caesarean. So on April 6, 1944 I underwent the second one. Both Surgeon and attending Physician advised my husband that it was imperative that I

undergo a hysterectomy as soon as my condition warranted as the Tumor was now larger.

I hesitated again during the summer months and finally on November 6th of 1944 I again entered Oak Park Hospital for the operation. After the usual tests for an operation of that kind, I was scheduled to go into Surgery the first thing Monday the 11th. On Sunday afternoon the Surgeon and Sister came into the room for an examination since he had not seen me since April. Turning to the Sister, he said, "Who told her that she had a tumor and needed a operation?" And she said that he had visually seen it in April and urged its removal. Upon further examination, he said, "You can go on home as there's no indication of one being present now." The astonished Sister kept saying, "But you saw it!" Later nurses who knew me in April came down and asked, "Say, who do you have praying for you?"

And so I left the Hospital at once, much to the surprise of our Pastor whom we met outside on his way to visit me. On arriving home, I phoned the Physician who had advised the abortion, was present and saw the Tumor during the second Caesarean and all he said was "I just can't say a thing. All I know is that I saw it, that it was in urgent need of re-

moval but if Dr. S... has said it isn't there—it is not." Later at his office, he wanted to "fix a schedule" so I wouldn't become pregnant and I laughed at him for his concern. He said, "Well, I can't say just what has happened, but it looks like the fact that you had two Caesareans has caused a scar tissue to form which has caused the Tumor to dissolve of itself so if you are not pained in any way from it, I'd just forget it."

And yesterday marked the fifth birthday of our son who came via the second Caesarean and within that time, I have done all the housework for our seven sons, nursed them through every type of illness and even now the above mentioned has been ill with rheumatic fever for two months and necessitated carrying around but never had I been bothered unduly and have led a normal married life during that time, without either becoming pregnant or being hampered by ailments common to many.

I must add that during the pregnancy from July 1943 to April 6, 1944 when I had recourse to Brother Meinrad I never had any pain, hemorrhages or any sickness as I did during the previous one—except a touch of pleurisy.

I was in touch with H... during all this while, and she can confirm any of my statements as well as many of my priest friends, pastors, etc. who knew of my condition and added their prayers for my welfare.

Sorry to make this so lengthy, but feel that this has been ample time to prove the effect of my intercession to Brother Meinrad and in humble thankfulness that I am still able to care for our seven, I am

Sincerely yours,
M.S.P. Illinois

I want to thank you for praying to Brother Meinrad for me and I want to thank Brother Meinrad for answering my request. I was in a sanatorium for T.B. but have recovered in what seemed a miraculous way. I have told others about Brother Meinrad and will keep on praying to him myself.

E.V., New Mexico.

MONTHLY NOVENA

15th to 23rd

All who wish their petitions or intentions prayed for, please send them in to THE GRAIL, St. Meinrad, Indiana, before the 15th of the month. A Novena of Masses will be offered each month for the glorification and canonization of Brother Meinrad and for all the intentions sent in.

In order to make Brother Meinrad better known a booklet of stamps to be used on envelopes and packages can be obtained for ten cents from THE GRAIL, ST. MEINRAD, INDIANA.



